Biographies of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs

سيـرة الخلفـاء الراشديـن

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Dar Al-Manarah for Translation, Publishing & Distribution is pleased to present the first edition of the *Biography of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs*. In answer to the deluge of mail we have received, all requesting a book on the life stories of the righteous caliphs who exerted all efforts in defending Islam and conveying it message to all corners of the earth, we undertook this task in an attempt to offer our readers a comprehensive coverage of the biographies of venerable caliphs.

We are so grateful to our team for their relentless, though certainly much appreciated, effort clearly manifested all through the book.

Publisher Muhammad `Uthmaan

Table of Contents

Foreword..........X

Abu Bakr As-Sideeq

Name and Lineage..........4
An Ideal Character in *Jahiliyyah* (the Pre-Islamic Period).......4
Qur'anic Verses Revealed in Reference to Abu Bakr..........6
Hadiths on the Virtues of Abu Bakr Alone..........12
Hadiths on the Virtues of Abu Bakr together with `Umar..........18
The Prophet 's Companions and Early Muslims Speak of Abu Bakr..........21
Abu Bakr is Called As-Sideeq..........22
Second of the Two..........23
Abu Bakr: the Best of the Prophet's Companions..........28
Abu Bakr: the Bravest Companion..........30
Abu Bakr: the Most Generous Companion..........31
Abu Bakr: the Most Knowledgeable and Intelligent Companion..........33
Abu Bakr's Steadfastness upon the Death of the Prophet.......36
Abu Bakr's Scrupulous Conscience..........43
Abu Bakr's Utter Fear of Allah..........44
Abu Bakr Never Reveals the Prophet's Secrets..........45
Abu Bakr's Tender Heart..........46
Abu Bakr's Interpretation of Dreams..........47
Verses, *Hadiths* and *Scholars* Saying Referring to Abu Bak's Caliphate..........48
Abu Bakr Elected Caliph..........51
The First Address..........54
Abu Bakr Sends out Usamah's Punitive Expedition..........54
Wars of Apostasy..........57
Fighting the *Zakaah* Withholders..........59
The Battle of Dhul Qissah..........62

Campaigns against the Apostates..65
Campaign against Tulayhah..68

Sajaah, the False Prophetess...71

Campaign Against Musaylamah Al-Khadhaab (The Liar).......78

The Battle of `Aqraba...80
The Battle of the Garden..82

The Treaty of Yamaamah...83

The Apostates of Bahrain..86
Campaigns in Oman and Mahrah..90
The Battle of Daba..91
Campaign in Yemen...93
The Conquests in the Lifetime of As-Sideeq........................94
The Motives behind Muslim Conquests...............................94
Aims of Muslim conquests..97
The Conquest of Iraq..99
The Battle of Chains...99
The Battle of Madhaar...101
The Battle of Walajah..102
The Battle of Ulays..104
The Conquest of Al-Heerah...106
The Conquest of Al-Anbaar...108
The Conquest of `Ayn At-Tamr...110
The Conquest of Doomat Al-Jandal...................................113
The Battle of Firaad...114
The Conquest of Ash-Shaam..115
The Battle of Yarmook..116
Invaluable Sermons of As-Sideeq......................................121
Some of His Wise Sayings..125
Abu Bakr's Pioneering Works..126
Abu Bakr: the First to Collect the Qur'an..........................127
Hadiths Reported by Abu Bakr..129

Abu Bakr's Last Illness..132
Abu Bakr Nominates `Umar as Caliph.............................132
Abu Bakr's Advice to the New Caliph..............................135
When It Was Time to Meet His End.................................136

`Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab:

His Early Days..142
`Umar Embraces Islam...142
`Umar Migrates Despite the Disbelievers..........................150
Hadith on the Virtues of `Umar.......................................151
The Prophet's Companions and Early Muslims Speak of `Umar 155
Instances When the Divine Revelation Concorded with `Umar's View...157
`Umar's Miracles 160
The Prophet Gives `Umar the Glad Tidings That He Will Be Admitted to Paradise...162
`Umar's Steadfast Faith..163
`Umar's Vast Knowledge 164
An Invaluable Advice from Al-Farooq (`Umar)..................165
`Umar Highly Revered By All..166
`Umar's Insight During the Expedition of Tabook.............168
`Umar's Utter Devotion in Worship 169
`Umar, an Example to Be Followed 170
`Umar's Exemplary Generosity...172
`Umar Mourns the Prophet's Death 174
`Umar Pledges Allegiance to Abu Bakr 176
`Umar Assumes the Caliphate 176
`Umar's Memorable Speeches..178
`Umar, a Matchless Caliph...180
`Umar's Famous Night Patrols 181
`Umar's Exemplary Justice 183
`Umar's Unique Loyalty and Gratitude 185
`Umar, Piety Incarnate 187

`Umar's Exemplary Austerity....................................189
`Umar's Endless Humbleness 192
`Umar Follows the Example of the Prophet 195
Highlights on `Umar's life 197
`Umar: A Pioneering Mentality 199
Events in the Life of `Umar 201
`Umar's Endless Tolerance 205
`Umar's Mercy on His Subjects 206
`Umar: The Founder of the Muslim State 209
Refuting Allegations Concerning `Umar's Deposing Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed 217
Muslims' Conquests in `Umar's Era 219
`Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab Takes Over 220
The Battle of Al-Yarmook 221
The Battles in Iraq 226
The Battle of the Bridge 227
The Battle of Al-Qadissiyah 229
The Conquest of Jerusalem 237
The Conquest of Egypt 246
The Babilion Castle 253
When It Was Time to Go 258
The Prophet's Companions Commend `Umar 267
Among `Umar's Memorable Words...................................268

`Uthmaan Ibn `Affaan:

His Early Days..273
His Personal Appearance...273
`Uthmaan Embraces Islam...274
`Uthmaan Earns the Title *Dhun-Noorayn* (Owner of the Two Lights)......276
The Angels Feel Bashful in the Presence Of `Uthmaan.......276
Hadiths on the Virtues of `Uthmaan.............................277
`Uthmaan as a Great Scholar.....................................279

\`Uthmaan Elected Caliph..280
\`Uthmaan's First Address..285
The First Case before \`Uthmaan..288
Conquests in the Life-Time of \`Uthmaan............................288
Rebellion of Azerbaijan and Armenia...................................290
Byzantine Invasion of Alexandria..291
Conquest of Khurasan and Tabrastan..................................291
Conquest of North Africa..292
The Conquest of Cyprus..292
The Battle of Dhaat As-Sawaari (31 AH – 652 AC)............295
Uthman's Pioneering acts...295
Official Manuscript of the Glorious Qur'an........................296
Extension of the Prophet's Mosque 297
\`Uthmaan's Trial...297
Main Causes...299
Who Is \`Abdullaah Ibn Saba'? And What Is His Relation to the Sedition?..305
The Caliph's Meeting with the Governors of Provinces.......312
The Siege of Caliph's House and His Martyrdom...............314

\`Ali Ibn Abi Taalib

Name and Lineage...321
His Personal Appearance...322
His Embracing of Islam...322
Hadiths on His Virtues..324
\`Ali's Exegesis of the Qur'an...327
Some of His Wise Sayings..327
Some of \`Ali's Wise Sayings, Sermons and Moral Values...329
Some Merits of the Commander of Faithful.......................338
A Brief Sketch of \`Ali's Private Life, Islamic Legal Rulings and Words..341
The *Hadiths* Narrated in Connection with the Kharijites......348

`Ali, May Allah Be Pleased With Him, Takes over............352
Revenge..352
Dismissing the Governors..353
The Situation between `Ali and Mu`awiyah Flares up........355
The Battle of Al-Jamal (the Camel)..................................356
The Aftermath of Al-Jamal Battle....................................360
The Preparation for the Battle of Sifeen...........................361
The Battle of Siffeen...363
The Arbitration...366
The Kharijites...368
The Final Phase of `Ali's Caliphate..................................369
The Death of the Commander of the Faithful.....................370

`Umar Ibn `Abel-`Azeez:

Name and Lineage...375
An Ideal Boy in His Childhood..376
His Merits and Virtues..376
`Umar before Becoming the Caliph.................................380
His Caliphate...380
`Umar's Exemplary Justice 383
`Umar's Ascetic Life..385
His Sense of Responsibility..386
`Umar Loathed Brides..387
`Umar, the Caliph, Entertains His Guests.........................388
Some of `Umar's Speeches...391
`Umar's Terminal Illness and Death.................................394
`Umar's Advice to the New Caliph..................................395
The Caliph Passes Away..396
`Umar's Last Speech...396
`Umar's Caliphate and Status..397
References..400

Foreword

As the world has lately crossed the threshold of the twenty first century, humanity sinks deeper in a sea of lawlessness, depravity and greed. The Muslim world is unfortunately no exception to the general rule. Hence emerges the need for a source of glowing sunshine at a time when Muslims turned their backs on a history they ought to take pride in. This is precisely what *The Four Righteous Caliphs* humbly aspires to be. For years on end, Muslims have abandoned their matchless source of power and dignity. It is only natural, therefore, that they were sadly brought to their knees at the hands of their meanest enemies. Present day Muslims are no longer the same people whom Allah speaks of saying:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِّتَكُونُواْ شُهَدَاء عَلَى النَّاسِ (البقرة:١٤٣)

"Thus have We made of you an Ummah justly balanced, that ye might be witnesses over the nations." (Al Baqarah: 143)

كُنتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللّـــه
(آل عمران: ١١٠)

"Ye are the best of Peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah." (Ali `Imraan: 110)

The real value of this book which elaborately deals with the life stories of the four Rightly-Guided Caliphs, in addition to that of `Umar Ibn `Abdel- `Azeez, is indeed considerable. The significance of contemplating their life histories is in fact three fold. Firstly, all five caliphs lived at a particularly critical juncture in the history of Islam. The revelation of Islam was in every sense a serious event that shook the entire of the Arab

Peninsula. Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, took the helm of an initially meager group of followers that continued to grow and spread by the day till the banner of Islam eventually managed to flutter despite its grudging enemies.

Nonetheless, the death of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was indeed a heavy blow that the yet blooming Muslim nation strove to survive. Realizing the enormity of their loss, Muslims shuddered, shed bitter tears and were muddled and confused. At that point, Islam was definitely at stake. Many of those who falsely claimed to have embraced Islam were quick to revert to their blind ignorance and despicable life of vice and orderlessness. Driven by rare intrepidity and dauntlessness, Abu Bakr As-Sideeq, may Allah be pleased with him, firmly took charge of the situation fiercely battling whoever even so much as toyed with the idea of slipping back into atheism. Since drastic maladies call for drastic remedies, Abu Bakr was just the man for the job, with a heart filled with true faith, unblemished by the slightest trace of fear or hesitation. It is therefore safe to say that the sword Abu Bakr boldly unsheathed in the face of the enemies of Islam was literally a new lease on life for it.

Afterwards, the constantly expanding Muslim state was stepping into another phase during which Islam spread outside the Arab Peninsula, to extend to faraway areas such as Syria, Iraq and Egypt. The responsibility was by no means simple. Further, a continually expanding state, in its own, required implementing a well-established, full-fledged system of government. Hence, the state whose foundations were laid down by Abu Bakr was then capably governed by `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him, in a way that can only be compared to that of prophets. Sending out massive armies to foreign lands in order to spread Islam and simultaneously delineating a well -thought-of system of government that he crowned with his wisdom, justice and piety were weighty tasks that only a firm, relentless man like

`Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab could have handled.

When `Uthmaan Ibn `Affaan came into office, he was to shoulder quite a responsibility. `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab had died leaving him a far-stretching empire that yet continued to grow. With natural lenience and tenderness of heart, `Uthmaan Ibn `Affaan, may Allah be pleased with him, succeeded in getting Muslims to take part in governing the state without allowing matters to get out of hand. Moreover, during his rule, Muslims basked in abundance and plenty, which did not necessarily have to be a blessing, but rather a test under wraps.

Then, Muslims came under the laudable rule of the fourth of the righteous caliphs, `Ali Ibn Abi Taalib, may Allah be pleased with him. Placed at the helm of a mature state that was easier to rules using subtle strategies of government rather than faithful adherence to the laws of Allah, `Ali adamantly abided by the true spirit of Islam. There was no way he would put satisfying people before declaring the truth and abolishing falsehood. Despite the fact that, during the final years of his rules, Muslims underwent a rather turbulent period of their history, `Ali Ibn Abi Taalib, may Allah be pleased with him, remained an example to be followed in piety, wisdom, firmness and intrepidity. One is not to be surprised for he was a true follower of Prophet Mohammed, peace and blessings be upon him, who adopted Islam as a child and whose sole role model was Allah's Messenger.

Last, though by no means least, the righteous caliphs were crowned by `Umar Ibn `Abdul `Azeez. `Umar was such an exceptional figure in the history of Muslim rulers to the point that he is generally referred to as the "fifth" of the righteous caliphs, although he lived many years after the decease of the last of them. During the rule of `Umar Ibn `Abdul `Azeez, the Muslim state had assumed a whole new dimension that called for a subtle ruler with wisdom and perception. Further, `Umar Ibn `Abdul `Azeez is best famous for his matchless justice, for which he later became an outstanding example to follow. Hence, thanks to his piety, together with his endless fear of Allah, `Umar Ibn `Abdul `Azeez was seen as capable of holding the candle to the four righteous caliphs, the likes of whom never trod on earth anew.

Hence, it becomes evident that those early years of Muslim history bore many challenges and trials. It goes without saying that men who were in charge of Muslims then were certainly paragons of matchless virtue, faith and character. Contrary to all rules, opposing extremes managed to exist inside their hearts in a way that rendered them memorable role models for every Muslim to follow. Allah, exalted be He, one more than one occasion describes them saying:

مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رِجَالٌ صَدَقُوا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِ فَمِنْهُم مَّن قَضَى نَحْبَهُ وَمِنْهُم مَّن يَنتَظِرُ وَمَا بَدَّلُوا تَبْدِيلا" (الأحزاب: ٢٣)

"Among the Believers are men who have been true to their Covenant with Allah: of them some have completed their vow (to the extreme), and some (still) wait: but they have never changed (their determination) in the least." (Al-Aẖzaab: 23)

"رِجَالٌ لا تُلْهِيهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلا بَيْعٌ عَن ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ يَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالأَبْصَارُ" (النور: ٣٧)

"By men whom neither traffic nor merchandise can divert from the Remembrance of Allah, nor from regular Prayer, nor from the practice of regular Charity: Their (only) fear is for the Day when hearts and eyes will be transformed (in world wholly new)." (An Noor: 37)

وَالسَّابِقُونَ الأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالأَنصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُم بِإِحْسَانٍ رَّضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتَهَا الأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ" (التوبة: ١٠٠)

"The vanguard (of Islam) -- the first of those who forsook (their homes) and of those who gave them aid, and (also) those who follow them in (all) good deeds -- well-pleased is Allah with them, as they are with Him: for them hath He prepared gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein forever: that is the supreme Felicity." (At Tawbah: 100)

مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاء عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاء بَيْنَهُم تَرَاهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا سِيمَاهُم فِي وُجُوهِهِم مِّنْ أَثَرِ السُّجُودِ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَاةِ وَمَثَلُهُم فِي الْإِنجِيلِ كَزَرْعٍ أَخْرَجَ شَطْأَهُ فَآزَرَهُ فَاسْتَغْلَظَ فَاسْتَوَى عَلَى سُوقِهِ يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَّاعَ لِيَغِيظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْهُم مَّغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا"

(الفتح: ٢٩)

"Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; and those who are with him are strong against Unbelievers, (but) compassionate among each other. Thou wilt see them bow and prostrate themselves (in prayer), seeking Grace from Allah and (His) Good Pleasure. On their faces are marks, (being) the traces of their prostration. This is their similitude in the Tawrah; and their similitude in the Gospel is like a seed which sends forth its blade, then makes its strong: it then becomes thick, and it stands on its own stem, (filling) the sowers it would wonder and delight. As a result, it fills the unbelievers with rage at them. Allah has promised those among them who believe and do righteous deeds forgiveness, and a great Reward." (Al-Fath: 29)

Secondly, this book proves to be especially significant due to the fact that it breathes a new vigorous spirit into the younger generations. By and large, reading Islamic history in general and the life stories of the righteous caliphs in particular is an essential step along the way to resurrecting the Muslim nation that once led the entire world. Getting acquainted with such spectacular examples can only lead Muslims to shake off ignorance in which it is shrouded.

Thirdly, a book that seeks to highlight numerous aspects of the life histories of Muslim leading figures since the decease of the prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, is not solely an interesting reading material. It also offers ample opportunity for Muslims to draw lessons and reflect on the real significance of incidents and events. The life of every Muslim caliph featured in the book abounds in situations that succeeding generations continue to look back on and learn from. Similarly, more than fourteen centuries later, their words are frequently quoted and widely revered. At a time when the world in general, and youth in specific, no longer have a role model to look up to, this book proves to be highly invaluable. Not only does it offer its readers a review of important historical events that considerably contributed in shaping Islamic history, it also offers Muslim youth shining examples that give them hope for a better future.

It is with great pleasure and pride that we present *The Four Righteous Caliphs* to our readers hoping that it will prove of some interest and use to them. Needless to say, compiling the life histories of the leading figures in Islamic history was by no means an easy job. Every care has been taken to include aspects of their characters and situations in their lives that are of particular significance to readers. We therefore invite every reader of the book to step outside the present realms of time and space and to prepare to encounter people, the likes of whom the world has no longer known since their demise. The book is indeed a trip into a world of absolute virtue, genuine unshaken faith as well as admirable fear of Allah. A reader can only marvel at those unique Muslims who deservedly merited Allah's satisfaction and handsome reward. We pray that readers will come to enjoy reading the book and also be able to benefit from it, leaving no chance for enemies of Islam to attempt to dig holes in our venerable Islamic history.

Abbreviations Used

AC	After Christ
AH	After Hijrah

Transliteration of Arabic Words and Names

The following table shows the system followed in transliterating the letters of the Arabic alphabet:

أ	A	T	ط
	Aa (long vowel)	Z	ظ
ب	B	` (inverted apostrophe)	ع
ت	T	Gh	غ
ث	Th	F	ف
ج	J	Q	ق
ح	H	K	ك
خ	Kh	L	ل
د	D	M	م
ذ	Dh	N	ن
ر	R	H	ه
ز	Z	w (consonant)	و
س	S	oo (long vowel)	
ش	Sh	y (consonant)	ى
ص	S	ee (long vowel)	
ض	D	' (apostrophe)	ء

أبــو بكــرالصديــق رضي الله عنه

Abu Bakr As-Siddeeq

may Allah be pleased with him

> *"The most bountiful of men unto me in his companionship and sacrifice of his wealth is Abu Bakr. If I were to choose a bosom friend (Khaleel), I would choose Abu Bakr, but companionship and brotherhood in Islam will remain until Allah unites us in His Presence"*
>
> **Prophet Muhammad ﷺ**

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- The Prophet 's Companions and Early Muslims Speak of Abu Bakr
- Abu Bakr is Called As-Sideeq
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- Abu Bakr: the Best of the Prophet's Companions
- Abu Bakr: the Bravest Companion
- Abu Bakr: the Most Generous Companion
- Abu Bakr: the Most Knowledgeable and Intelligent Companion
- Abu Bakr's Steadfastness upon the Death of the Prophet
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- Abu Bakr's Utter Fear of Allah
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- Campaign against Tulayhah
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- When It Was Time to Meet His End

Name and Lineage:

Born in Makkah (Mecca) in 573 AC, Abu Bakr As-Siddeeq, may Allah be pleased with him, was two years younger than Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He belonged to a respectable and noble family, Banu Tameem, a branch of the tribe of Quraysh. He shares the same lineage with Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in Banu Murrah.

Abu Bakr was not his real name; his name was `Abdullaah. His father's name was `Uthmaan Ibn `Aamir, who was known by his patronymic name, Abu Quhafah. In his *Tahdheeb*, An-Nawawi states: His name was `Abdullaah. This view is believed to be the most correct. It is said that Abu Bakr was known by the name `Ateeq (the freed person); however, the majority of scholars agree that `Ateeq was his surname.

The Mother of the Believers, `Aa'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, reports that she was in the Prophet's house while his Companions were sitting in the courtyard, with a barrier between them and her, When Abu Bakr came, the Prophet said: "*Whoever is pleased to look at a man who has been freed of the Hell-Fire (`Ateeq), let him look at this man (pointing at Abu Bakr).*"(Reported by At-Tirmidhi.) In another version, `Aa'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, reports that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said to Abu Bakr: "*Be of good cheer, you are `Ateeq (freed) of the Hell-Fire. `Aa'ishah added, Ever since that day he has been called `Ateeq.* " (Reported by At-Tirmidhi.)

An Ideal Character in *Jahiliyyah* (the Pre-Islamic Period):

Since his boyhood, Abu Bakr was quiet and sincere. He was very honest and truthful. He was a softhearted man and keenly felt others' sufferings and miseries. He used to help the poor, the needy, the distressed and the downtrodden.

Before he embraced Islam, he was a fairly wealthy merchant, a respected character of amiable and compassionate demeanor. Because of his honesty, people trusted him and often left their money with him for safekeeping. His nobility and truthfulness soon made him a rich trader.

Ibn Ishaaq narrates: Abu Bakr was a man whom society desired, well liked and of easy manners. He knew more about the genealogy of Quraysh than anyone else, and knew their faults and merits. He was a merchant of high character and kindness. The people of Quraysh used to visit him to discuss many matters with him, because of his vast knowledge, experience in commerce, and his sociable nature.

Even before embracing Islam, he abhorred most of the customs and traditions of *Jahiliyyah* (the pre-Islamic period). He never drank alcohol, nor did he join in the worship of idols, practiced by his contemporaries. Because of his sterling character, he was the closest friend of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, since his youth, and their companionship proved to be life-long. He also accompanied the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, in some of his trade missions. Actually, these qualities were soon to serve the noblest Cause of Allah.

`Aa'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, is reported to have said: "*By Allah, Abu Bakr never composed poetry neither before nor after embracing Islam. He, together with `Uthmaan, refrained from drinking alcohol in Jahiliyyah.*" (Reported by Ibn `Asaakir with a good chain of narrators.)

On the authority of Abu Al-`Aaliyah Ar-Rayhaani who narrates: While people were sitting in the company of some Companions of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Bakr was asked, "Did you drink alcohol in *Jahiliyyah*? He replied, "Allah forbid!" When he was asked why he did not do so he answered: "I was keen on preserving my sense of honor and decorous character, while the one who drinks alcohol does not show concern for preserving his honor or character. The narrator added, "When the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of what he (Abu Bakr) said, he remarked, "Abu Bakr has spoken the truth, Abu Bakr has spoken the truth."(Reported by Ibn `Asaakir with a strange chain of narrators.)

Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleaded with him, said in the presence of some Companions: "I never prostrated myself before an idol. That is because when I reached the age of puberty, my father, Abu Quhafah, took me by the hand and went to a chamber in which were some idols, and said to me, 'These are your mighty and supreme deities.' He then left me and went away. I approached one idol and began to entreat, 'I'm hungry, so feed me', but it did not respond. I prayed again, 'I'm naked, so clothe me,' yet it did not reply. So I hurled it with some rock and it fell down".

Thus Abu Bakr was an ideal character even before accepting Islam. It is no wonder, therefore, that he is regarded as the best man after the Prophet, as the latter is reported to have said: "*Those who were the best amongst you in Jahiliyyah, are the best after embracing Islam, provided they comprehend religions knowledge*." (Reported by Al-Bukhari.)

Qur'anic Verses Revealed in Reference to Abu Bakr:

Glory belongs only to Almighty Allah; however, He grants virtue, merit and dignity to whomsoever He pleases. When Allah accords anyone with noble status, no mortal being can disgrace or degrade him without himself being humiliated. The status of Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, was so elevated that a host of Qur'anic verses make reference to him, thus confirming his virtues and merits. Here are some examples:

Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"ثَانِيَ اثْنَيْنِ إِذْ هُمَا فِي الْغَارِ إِذْ يَقُولُ لِصَاحِبِهِ لاَ تَحْزَنْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا فَأَنزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ" (التوبة: ٤٠)

"...they two were in the Cave , and he said to his companion, have no fear, for Allah is with us: then Allah sent down his peace upon him." (At-Tawbah: 40) Muslim scholars have unanimously agreed that the "companion" referred to in this verse, is Abu Bakr As-Sideeq, may Allah be pleased with him.

Ibn `Abbaas is reported to have explained the verse,

"فَأَنزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ" (التوبة: ٤٠)

"...then Allah sent down his peace upon him" (At-Tawbah: 40) saying: "upon him" means upon Abu Bakr, as serenity was already inherent in the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. (Reported by Ibn Abi Haatim.)

Ibn Mas`ood reports that Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, purchased Bilaal (who was a slave to) Umayyah Ibn Khalaf and Ubayy Ibn Khalaf, and set him free for Allah's Sake. Then Allah Almighty revealed the verses:

"وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَى" (الليل: ١)

"By the Night as if conceals the light "

up to

"إِنَّ سَعْيَكُمْ لَشَتَّى" (الليل: ٤)

"Verily, (he ends) ye strive for are diverse. " (Al-Layl: 1-4) i.e. the ends of Abu Bakr, Umayyah and Ubayy (are diverse). (Reported by Ibn Abi Haatim.) `

`Aamir Ibn `Abdellaah Ibn Az-Zubayr narrates: Abu Bakr used to free slaves and make them accept Islam in Makkah. He set free elderly men and women upon their acceptance of Islam. His father (Abu Quhafah) said to him: "My son, I see that you are freeing weak slaves. If you want to continue doing what you do, why don't you free powerful men who could defend and protect you?" Abu Bakr said, "My effort in this regard is solely for the Sake of Allah." It is said that these verses were revealed in reference to him (Abu Bakr):

"فَأَمَّا مَن أَعْطَى وَاتَّقَى" (الليل:٥)

"***So he who gives (in Charity) and fears (Allah)***" (Al-Layl: 5) (Reported by Ibn Jareer.)

`Urawah is reported to have said: "Abu Bakr As-Sideeq, may Allah be pleased with him, freed seven people who were subjected to torture in Allah's Cause. It was about him that the verse was revealed:

"وَسَيُجَنَّبُهَا الأَتْقَى" (الليل:١٧)

"***But those most devoted to Allah shall be-removed far from it (i. e. the Hell-Fire)***" up to the end of the *Surah*. (Reported by Ibn Abi Haatim and At-Tabarani.)

`Abdullaah Ibn Az-Zubayr states: The Qur'anic verse,

"وَمَا لأَحَدٍ عِندَهُ مِن نِّعْمَةٍ تُجْزَى" (الليل:١٩)

"***And have in their minds no favor from anyone for which a reward is expected in return*** "(Al-Layl: 19) up to the end of the *Surah*, was revealed in reference to Abu Bakr As-Sideeq, may

Allah be pleased with him. (Reported by Al-Bazzaar.)

\`Aa'ishah; may Allah be pleased with her, is reported to have said that Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, never broke his oath until Allah, Exalted be He, revealed the expiation for breaking one's oath. (Reported by Al-Bukhari.)

Ibn \`Abbaas notes that the verse,

"وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الأَمْرِ" (آل عمران:١٥٨)

"***...and consult with them upon the conduct of affairs***" (Al-\`Imraan: 158) refers to Abu Bakr and \`Umar, may Allah be pleased with them both. (Reported by Al-Haakim.)

On the authority of Ibn Shawbadh who said that the verse,

"وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّتَانِ" (الرحمن:٤٦)

"But for him win feareth the standing before his Lord there are two gardens " (Ar-Rahmaan: 46) was reveled concerning Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him. (Reported by Ibn Abi Haatim.)

Usayd Ibn Safwaan reports that \`Ali (Ibn Abi Taalib) said concerning the verse,

"وَالَّذِي جَاءَ بِالصِّدْقِ وَصَدَّقَ بِهِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ" (الزمر:٣٣)

"And he who brings that truth and he who confirms (and supports) it such are the men who do right." (Az-Zumar: 33) "*he who brings the Truth*" refers to Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and "*he who confirms (and* *supports)"* it refers to Abu Bakr As-Sideeq, may Allah be pleased with him. (Reported by Al-Bazzaar and Ibn `Asaakir.)

Ibn `Umar and Ibn `Abbaas are reported to have said that the verse,

"وَصَالِحُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ" (التحريم: ٤)

"...and the righteous among the believers" (AT-Tahreem: 4) was revealed concerning Abu Bakr and `Umar (Ibn Al-Khattaab)

In his exegesis of the Qur'an, `Abdullaah Ibn Abi Humayd reports Mujahid to have said: "When the verse,

"إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا" (الأحزاب: ٥٦)

"Allah and his Angels send blessing on the Prophet: O ye that believe send ye blessings on him, and salute him with all respect" (Al-Ahzaab: 56) was revealed, Abu Bakr said, Never was anything good sent down you, Then the verse was revealed:

"هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَلِّي عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَلائِكَتُهُ لِيُخْرِجَكُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَكَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيمًا" (الأحزاب: ٤٣)

"He it is Who send blessings on you, as do His angels, that He may bring you out from the depths' of Darkness into Light: and He is Full of Mercy to the Believers. " (Al-Ahzaab: 43)

`Ali Ibn Al-Husayn is reported to have said that the verse,

"وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِم مِّنْ غِلٍّ إِخْوَانًا عَلَى سُرُرٍ مُّتَقَابِلِينَ" (الحجر:٤٧)

"And we shall remove from their hearts any lurking sense of injury: (they will be) brothers (joyfully) facing each other on thrones (of dignity)" (Al-Hijr: 47) was revealed concerning Abu Bakr, `Umar, and `Ali. (Reported by Ibn `Asaakir.)

On the authority of Ibn `Abbaas: The verses,

وَوَصَّيْنَا الإنسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسَانًا(الأحقاف:١٥)

"We have enjoined on man kindness to his parents"
up to

"وَعْدَ الصِّدْقِ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ" (الأحقاف:١٦)

"...a promise of truth, which was made to them (in this life)." (Al-Ahqaaf: 16) were revealed in reference to Abu Bakr As-Sideeq, may Allah be pleased with him. (Reported by Ibn `Asaakir.)

Ibn `Uyaynah is reported to have said: Allah reproached all the companions who failed to defend the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, except Abu Bakr. Then he recited the verse,

"إِلاَّ تَنصُرُوهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ إِذْ أَخْرَجَهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ ثَانِيَ اثْنَيْنِ إِذْ هُمَا فِي الْغَارِ إِذْ يَقُولُ لِصَاحِبِهِ لاَ تَحْزَنْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا فَأَنزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ" (التوبة:٤٠)

"If ye help not (your Leader), (it is no matter): for Allah did indeed help him, when the Unbelievers drove him out: he had

no more than one companion: they tow were in the Cave, and he said to his companion, have no fear, for Allah is with us: then Allah sent down his peace upon him." (At-Tawbah: 40)

Hadiths on the Virtues of Abu Bakr Alone:

Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, is reported to have said, "I heard the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, saying: *"Whoever spends a pair of something in Allah's Cause will be called from all the gates of Paradise," O Allah's slave! This is good.' He who is amongst those who pray, will be called from the gate of prayer (in Paradise); he who is from the people who perform Jihad (in the Cause of Allah) will be called from the gate of Jihad; he who is from those who give in charity will be called from the gate of charity; and he who is amongst those who observe fast will be called from the gate of Ar-Rayyaan."* Abu Bakr said: "He who will called from all these gates is in no need of anything: will anyone be called from all those gates, O Messenger of Allah?" "Yes," replied the Prophet, "and I hope you will be among them, Abu Bakr."

Abu Sa`eed Al-Khudryy, may Allah be pleased with him, reports that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: *"The most bountiful of men unto me in his companionship and sacrifice of his wealth is Abu Bakr. If I were to take an intimate friend other than my Lord, I would take Abu Bakr. But what binds us is the brotherhood of Islam and its love."* (Reported by Al-Bukhari and Moslem.)

Abu Ad-Dardaa', may Allah be pleased with him, narrates: I was sitting with the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, when Abu Bakr came, greeted us, and then said: "There was a dispute between me and `Umar, and I made him angry. Then I felt remorse, followed him, and asked him to forgive me, but he refused, so I come to you, (O Messenger of Allah!)." The Prophet said thrice, *"May Allah forgive you, Abu Bakr."* In the meantime `Umar repented and felt sorry for what he had done, he went to Abu Bakr's house, but he did find him at home. Then he came to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, (and related the story to him); the Prophet's displeasure could be read from his face. Seeing this, Abu Bakr felt sorry for `Umar knelt in front of the Prophet, saying twice, "O Allah's Messenger! By Allah, I was more at fault (than `Umar)." Allah's Messenger said, *"O people, when I said, I have been sent as a Messenger of Allah to you all, you said, 'You are telling a lie,' while Abu Bakr said, 'You have spoken the truth, and he gave me solace with his person and properly.' Will you leave my companion alone once and for all? Will you leave my companion alone once and for all?!"* After this, Abu Bakr was never harmed again. (Reported by Al-Bukhari and Moslem)

Ibn `Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, reports the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, to have said: *"On the Day of Resurrection, Allah will not look at a person who drags his clothes of ostentation."* On that Abu Bakr said, "O Messenger of Allah! One side of my clothes hangs loose if I do not hold them place. The Prophet said, *'You are not one of those who do that for the sake for ostentation. "* (Reported by Al-Bukhari.)

Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, narrates: Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, once said: *"Who amongst you is fasting to day?"* Abu Bakr said, that The Prophet asked again, *"Who amongst you has been in a funeral procession?"* Abu Bakr said, that The Prophet asked further, *"Who amongst you has served food to the needy?"* Abu Bakr said, that The Prophet asked again, *'Who amongst you has visited a sick person today?"* Abu Bakr said that he did all of these acts. Thereupon Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, said: *"Whoever combines in himself (all these virtues) will enter Paradise."* (Reported by Moslem.)

Ibn `Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, quotes the Prophet, peace and blessing be upon him, to have said to Abu Bakr: *"You are my companion at the Al-Hawd (Fount)*[1] *and my companion in the cave."* (Reported by At-Tirmidhi)

`Abdullaah Ibn Ahmad, may Allah be pleased with him, reports with a good chain of narrators, that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, *"Abu Bakr is my intimate friend and my affable companion in the cave."*

Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, reports the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, to have said: *"What an excellent man Abu Bakr is, what an excellent man `Umar is ... "* (Reported by Al-Bukhari, Abu Dawood and At-Tirmidhi.)

Abu Sa`eed Al-Khudryy reports Allah's Messenger to have said: *"People of higher ranks (in Paradise) will be seen by those beneath them the way you can detect a bright star shining in the sky. Abu Bakr and `Umar will be among them. How excellent they are!"* (Reported by Ahmad, At-Tirmidhi, and Ibn Hibbaan.)

Anas Ibn Malik and `Ali Ibn Abi Taalib, may Allah be pleased with them both, narrate that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, said to Abu Bakr and `Umar:

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[1] This is the Fount (of abundance) which Allah mentions in *Surah, "Al-Kawthar"*. On Judgment Day, righteous Muslims will be allowed to drink from this Fount, after which they will not grow thirsty ever again.

"Those two will be the chiefs of the old men in Paradise, both from old and modern times, excluding Messengers and Prophets... Do not tell them of that, `Ali." (Reported by At-Tirmidhi.)

Anas Ibn Malik narrates, " The Prophet ascended the mountain of Uhud accompanied by Abu Bakr, `Umar and `Uthmaan. The mountain shook beneath them. The Prophet hit it with his foot and said, *"O Uhud! Be firm, for on you there is none but a Prophet, a Siddeeq (Abu Bakr) and a martyr (i.e. and two martyrs)."* (Reported by Al-Bukhari, Abu Dawood and At-Tirmidhi.)

Ibn `Umar, may Allah be pleased with them both, reports that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: *"The most merciful of my nation to my nation is Abu Bakr; the firmest in abiding by Allah's Commands is `Umar; the most bashful is `Uthmaan; and the best in judgment is `Ali."* (Reported by Ahmad, At-Tirmidhi and An-Nasaa'i.)

Sa`eed Ibn Jubayr, may Allah be pleased with him, narrates: "I recited before the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, the verse,

"يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ " (الفجر:٢٧)

"...to the righteous soul will he said:) O (thou) soul, in (complete) rest and satisfaction!" (Al-Fajr: 27) Abu Bakr said, "What a good thing this is, O Messenger of Allah!" To this the Prophet said, *"The Angel will say it to you when you are dying."* (Reported by Ibn Haatim and Abu Nu`aym.)

Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, quotes the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, as saying: *"It is* *incumbent upon my nation to love Abu Bakr and to show gratitude to him."* (Reported by Ibn `Asaakir.)

On the authority of `Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn `Awf, may Allah be pleased with him, who reports that he heard Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, saying: *"Abu Bakr will be admitted to Paradise, so will `Umar, so will `Uthmaan, so will `Ali, so will Talhah, so will Az-Zubayr, so will `Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn `Awf, so will Sa`d Ibn Abi Waqqaas, so will Sa`eed Ibn Zayd, so will Abu `Ubayd Ibn Al-Jarraah."* (Reported by At-Tirmidhi.)

Abu Moosa Al-Ash`aryy narrates: "One day, I performed ablution (*Wudoo'*) in my house and then went out with the determination that I would remain with Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, and spend the whole day with him." I went to the Mosque and asked about the Prophet, peace and blessing be upon him. They (the Companions) told me that he had gone in a certain direction. So I followed the road he took asking about him. I found him by a well called Arees. I sat by its gate, which was made of date-palm leaves, until the Prophet answered the call of nature and then performed *Wudoo'*." I went up to him and he was sitting in the middle of its edge with his shanks uncovered and his legs dangling in the well. I saluted him and went back and sat at the gate. I said, "Today I will be the gatekeeper of Allah's Messenger." Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, came and knocked the door, and I asked, 'Who is it?' He said, 'Abu Bakr.' I said, 'Wait, please,' and I went in and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, here is Abu Bakr seeking permission to enter. The Prophet said, *"Bid him come in and give him the glad tidings that he will be admitted to Paradise."* so I went out and said to Abu Bakr, 'Come in, and Allah's Messenger gives you the glad tidings that you will be admitted to Paradise.' Abu Bakr entered and sat on the right side of

Allah's Messenger by the edge of the well and hung his legs in the well as the Prophet did and uncovered his legs. I then returned and sat (at the gate). I had left my brother while he was performing *Wudoo'* and intending to follow me. So I said to myself: 'If Allah wishes good for so-and-so, i.e. my brother. He will bring him here. Suddenly someone moved the door, and I asked, "Who is it?" He said, `Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, I asked him to wait. Then I went to Allah's Messenger, greeted him, and said, 'Here is `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab seeking permission to get in.' The Prophet said: *"Admit him, and give him the glad tidings that he will be admitted to Paradise."* I went back to `Umar, bade him come in, and said to him, 'Allah's Messenger gives you the glad tidings that you will be admitted to Paradise.' So he entered and sat down with Allah's Messenger on his left side and dangled his legs in the well... " (Reported by Al-Bukhari and Moslem)

Abi Mulaykah narrates: I heard Ibn `Abbaas say: When `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab was placed in the bier, the people gathered around him praising him and supplicated for him before burial, and I was present. Nothing caught my attention but a person who gripped my shoulder from behind. I turned and found that he was `Ali Ibn Abi Taalib. He invoked Allah's Mercy upon `Umar and said: "You have left none behind you (whose) deeds (are so enviable) that I love to meet Allah with By Allah, I hoped that Allah would keep you and your two Companions together. I had often heard Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, say: *"I came and there came too Abu Bakr and `Umar; entered and there entered too Abu Bakr and `Umar; I went out and there went out too Abu Bakr and `Umar, and I hope and think that Allah will keep you along with them."* (Reported by Al-Bukhari and Moslem.)

Abu Bakr narrates: The Prophet once asked, "Did any of you see anything in his dream?" A man said to the Prophet, "O Messenger of Allah, I saw in my dream as if a balance came down from Heaven in which you were weighed against Abu Bakr and outweighed him, then Abu Bakr was weighed against `Umar and outweighed him, then `Umar was weighed against `Uthmaan and outweighed him, then the balance was raised up." (Reported by Abu Dawood and At-Tirmidhi)

Hadiths on the Virtues of Abu Bakr together with `Umar:

In addition to the praise of Allah, Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, received from the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, alone, the following *Hadiths* make mention of Abu Bakr together with `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab.

On the authority of Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, who says that he heard Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, say: *"While a shepherd was tending his sheep, a wolf attacked them and took away one sheep. When the shepherd chased the wolf, the latter turned towards him and said, 'Who will be its guard on the "day of wild beasts", when there will be no shepherd for it except me! And while a man was driving a cow with a load on it, it turned towards him and spoke to him saying, 'I have not been created for this purpose (i.e. carrying); I have been creating for ploughing. The people exclaimed, 'Glory be to Allah! The Prophet said, "But I believe the story and so do Abu Bakr and `Umar. The narrator said, "Abu Bakr and `Umar were not present then."* (Reported by Al-Bukhari and Moslem.) The Prophet said that Abu Bakr and `Umar would believe the story, even though they were not present then, because he knew that they were staunch believers who used to believe every word of the Prophet.

Abu Sa`eed Al-Khudryy reports that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: *"No Prophet was sent except that he had two ministers from the Heaven and two on earth. As for my ministers from Heaven, they are Gabriel (Jibreel) and Michael (Mikaa'eel). And as for my ministers on earth, they are Abu Bakr and `Umar."* (Reported by At-Tirmidhi.)

Sa`eed Ibn Zayd reports that he heard Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, say: *"Abu Bakr will be admitted to Paradise, and so will be `Umar, `Uthmaan,"* and he mentioned the rest of the ten (people whom the Prophet gave the glad tidings of entering Paradise)." (Reported by the authors of *Sunan* and others.)

`Umar narrates: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, went out one day and entered the mosque with Abu Bakr and `Umar on his right and left and each holding one hand. Then he said, *"This way we will he resurrected on the Day of Judgment.* " (Reported by At-Tirmidhi and Al-Haakim.)

Ibn `Umar also reports that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "*I am the first to he resurrected on the Day of Judgment, followed by Abu Bakr and `Umar afterwards.* " (Reported by At-Tirmidhi and Al-Haakim.)

Ibn `Umar further reports that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, once saw Abu Bakr and `Umar and said, "*They are to me like my hearing and seeing.*" I (Reported by At-Tabaraani.)

On the authority of Al-Baraa' Ibn `Aazib who says: I was sitting with the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, when Abu Bakr and `Umar came. The Prophet said to them, "*All praise and thanks are due to Allah, Who grants me strength through you.*" (Reported by At-Tabaraani.)

`Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn Ghanam narrates, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said to Abu Bakr and `Umar, "*If you both agreed on something, I would not oppose you.*" (Reported by Ahmad.)

Ibn Sa`d narrates: Ibn `Umar was asked, "Who used to give *Fatwa* (Islamic legal ruling) during the lifetime of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him?" He said, "Abu Bakr and `Umar, and no one else."

Ibn Mas`ood narrates that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, *"Every Prophet had an intimate companion from amongst his people, and my intimate Companions are Abu Bakr and `Umar."* (Reported by At-Tabaraani.)

`Ali narrates that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said; *"May Allah rest the soul of Abu Bakr in peace: he gave his daughter (i.e. `Aa'ishah) in marriage to me, carried me (on his riding animal) to the place of Hijrah (i. e. Madeenah,) and freed Bilaal. May Allah rest the soul of `Umar in peace: he spoke the truth even if he were to suffer on account of it, and he observed the truth which made people hate him and caused his loss of friends. May Allah rest the soul of `Uthmaan in peace: the angels feel shy in his presence. May Allah rest the soul of `Ali in peace: 0 Allah, make him observe the truth wherever he may be.* " (Reported by Ibn `Asaakir.)

Sahl is reported to have said: When the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, returned from the Farewell

Pilgrimage (*Hajjatul-Wadaa'*), he sat in the pulpit, gave praise and thanks to Allah, and then said: "*O people, Abu Bakr never did anything that displeased me, so acknowledge this virtue of his. O people, I am pleased with him, `Umar, `Uthmaan, `Ali, Talhah, Az-Zubayr, Sa`d, `Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn `Awf, the earliest Muhajireen, so bear this in mind when dealing with them.*" (Reported by At-Tabaraani.)

In a *Marfoo` Hadith*[2], Anas reports that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "*To love Abu Bakr and `Umar is an act of belief, and to hate them is an act of disbelief.*" (Reported by Ibn `Asaakir.)

The Prophet's Companions and Early Muslims Speak of Abu Bakr:

`Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "Abu Bakr is our master." (Reported by Al-Bukhari.) He also said: "If Abu Bakr's faith was placed in one of the scales of a balance and the faith of all the people in the other, his would outweigh theirs." (Reported by Al-Bayhaqyy.)

`Umar further said; "I wish I were a hair in Abu Bakr's breast." (Reported by Musaddid.)

`Umar was also reported to have said: "The smell of Abu Bakr was far more better than the smell of musk."

`Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, is reported to have said: "The best of people after the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, are Abu Bakr and `Umar. Never should I be loved by a man who hates Abu Bakr and `Umar."

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[2] *Hadith* with an unbroken chain of narrators.

(Reported by At-Tabaraani)

\`Ali narrates: "Never did I compete with Abu Bakr in doing good deeds but found that he outdid me." (Reported by At-Tabaraani.)

Ar-Rubayyi\` Ibn Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "We read about the Companions of Prophets, yet we did not find that any of them had a Companion like Abu Bakr As-Sideeq " (Reported by Ibn \`Asaakir.)

Az-Zuhri said, "One of the virtues of Abu Bakr was that he never had doubt concerning Allah."

Az-Zubayr Ibn Bakkaar said: "I heard some scholars say, the orators of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, were Abu Bakr As-Sideeq and \`Ali Ibn Abi Taalib, may Allah be pleased with them both."

Ar-Rubayyi Ibn Anas said, "Abu Bakr is like rain wherever it falls it brings good."

Abu Bakr is Called As-Sideeq:

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was uplifted to the Heavens, just after the demise of the Prophet's uncle, Abu Taalib, and his wife Khadeejah, may Allah be pleased with her. It was a time of sadness and disconsolation for the Prophet, and the situation for Islam appeared to be dark. It was there that he was assured of the destiny of Islam.

The morning after his ascension, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, told the Quraysh that he had been carried from Makkah to Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, and from there he had ascended to the heavens. He narrated to them what he had seen.

When the non-believing Quraysh heard of the Prophet 's ascension to heaven, they regarded it as an absurdity, and began to ridicule the Prophet for his declaration. "This is unbelievable!" they exclaimed. "It takes a month for a caravan to go the Levant (Ash-Shaam) and a month to return, how could you do the return journey in one night?"

There were also some Muslims who wavered in believing the ascension of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, to the heavens. Some of them went to Abu Bakr and informed him of the Prophet 's journey to Jerusalem and ascension to the heavens. Some expressed doubt about the veracity of the ascension, but when this question was posed to Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, he silenced them with his unforgettable words: "If he (the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him) says so, then he is truthful. There is nothing to be surprised about. I believe him when he says that he received a revelation from Heaven in an hour of the day or night. And that is beyond what you cavail at. "

It was on that occasion that he earned the title As-Sideeq. May Allah be pleased with him and rest his soul in peace.

Second of the Two:

Having heard the news of the success of Muslims in preaching Islam in Madeenah, the unbelievers at Makkah grew more and more furious and began to inflict intolerable atrocities on Muslims. The savagery and torture of the Quraysh escalated and the Muslims could not endure the severe maltreatment. Makkah was no longer a safe place for

Muslims to dwell in. At that point, Allah Almighty gave the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, permission to emigrate to Yathrib (Madeenah). In the name of religion the Muslims were to leave their homes and hearths, and begin a new life in another city.

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, allowed Muslims to emigrate for Madeenah in batches. Only the Prophet, Abu Bakr, `Ali and the helpless honorable souls, who had been detained in confinement or were unable to break free from slavery, remained there. When Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, sought permission to emigrate to, the Prophet said to him, "Don't be in hurry, for it may be that Allah will give you a companion." Abu Bakr took this to imply that he was to accompany the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, in the journey. He felt happy and honored at the prospect of being the Prophet's traveling companion to Yathrib. He bought two camels, and made other preparations for their travel.

In the meantime, the Quraysh of Makkah made a plot to murder the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, but Almighty Allah foiled their evil conspiracy. The Qur'an makes mention of this plot:

﴿وَإِذْ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ لِيُثْبِتُوكَ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوكَ أَوْ يُخْرِجُوكَ وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ اللّهُ وَاللّهُ
خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ {٣٠}﴾ (الأنفال: ٣٠)

"Remember How the Unbelievers plotted against thee, to keep thee in bonds, or slay thee, or get thee (of thy home). They plot and plan and Allah too plans, but the best of planners is Allah." (Al-Anfaal: 30)

One hot afternoon, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, went to the house of his companion, Abu Bakr, and gave him the tidings that the time for their emigration had come. "Allah has given me permission to leave the city and emigrate," the Prophet said. "Together with me? " asked Abu Bakr. "Together with you, " replied the Prophet. The two camels were saddled, and they hired `Abdullaah Ibn Urayqit, who then had not yet embraced Islam, to lead them on the way.

The assassins kept vigil all night long, waiting to pounce on the Prophet the moment he left his house. Every now and then they peeped through a hole in the door to make sure that he was still lying on his bed. The Prophet and `Ali were soon aware of their presence; and the Prophet picked up a cloak that he used to sleep with and gave it to `Ali, saying, "Sleep on my bed, and wrap yourself in this green cloak of mine. Sleep in it, and no harm shall befall you." Then the Prophet stepped out of his house casting a handful of dust at the assassins and began to recite:

"يس {١} وَالْقُرْآنِ الْحَكِيمِ {٢} إِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ {٣} عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ {٤}"
(يس: ١–٤)

"Ya-seen. The Qur'an, full of wisdom. Thou art indeed one of the Messenger, on a straight way. " (Yaseen: 1-4)

He came to the words:

"وَجَعَلْنَا مِن بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ سَدًّا وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ سَدًّا فَأَغْشَيْنَاهُمْ فَهُمْ لاَ يُبْصِرُونَ {٩}"
(يس: ٩)

"And We have put a bar in front of them and a bar behind them, and further, we have covered them up, so that they cannot see." (Yaseen: 9) At that point the Prophet went out of the house and passed between them unnoticed and went on his way.

At dawn, the assassins barged into the Prophet 's house and to their utter surprise, found that the person lying in the Prophet 's bed was `Ali, and not Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This created a stir in the whole city.

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companion Abu Bakr proceeded to hide in a neglected cave a few miles south of Makkah on Mount Thawr. When they had ventured a little beyond the precincts of Makkah, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, halted his camel, looked back, and said: "Of all Allah's earth, you are the dearest place unto me and the dearest unto Allah, and had not my people driven me out of you, I would not have left you. "

Abu Bakr first walked into the cave of Thawr. He plugged all the holes, cleaned it and then asked the Prophet to step in. They stayed in that cave for three nights. During that period, `Abdullaah, son of Abu Bakr, would go to see them daily after dusk and apprise them of the situation in Makkah. `Aamir Ibn Fuhayrah used to steal away unobserved every evening with a few goats to cover up the tracks of `Abdullaah and furnish them with a plentiful supply of milk. Asmaa', daughter of Abu Bakr, also came with a bag of provisions; but she had forgotten to bring a rope, so she took off her girdle and cut it into two, using one to tie the bag and keeping the other for herself.[3]

Abu Bakr was very afraid for the Prophet , peace and blessings be upon him. One day, the enemy reached the mouth of the cave and came close to finding the two faithful souls. At that point, Abu Bakr whispered to the Prophet : "What if they were to look through the crevice and detect us? We are unarmed and at the bottom of the cave." Thereupon, the Prophet reassured him saying,

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[3] For this reason she earned the title "*Dhatu-Nitaqayn* ", or the woman of the two girdles.

﴿لاَ تَحْزَنْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا﴾ (التوبة: ٤٠)

"Have no fear, for Allah is with us." (At-Tawbah: 40) Then the Prophet said to him, "What do you think of two when Allah is their third?"

Quraysh, on the other hand, were quite baffled and exasperated. A price was set upon the Prophet 's head. They offered a hundred camels as a reward for whoever could seize Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and bring him back. This had spurred many to try their luck. Among those who were on the lookout for the Prophet and his Companion to win the reward was Suraqah Ibn Maalik. He, as Ibn Al-Qayyim narrates, received information that a party of four had been spotted on a certain route. So he decided to pursue it secretly so that he alone would gain the reward. He mounted one of the best horses and went in pursuit of the Prophet and Abu Bakr. On the way, the horse stumbled and Suraaqah fell. He later resumed the chase but was once again curbed the same way, yet the lust for material gain made him pay no heed to it. Again he swung himself into the saddle and galloped on at a breaking speed till he came quite close to the Prophet. Abu Bakr's heart palpitated and he told the Prophet, "O Messenger of Allah, we are done for. " But the Prophet said, "Be not cast down, for Allah is certainly with us."

The repeated stumbling and falling from Suraqah's horse made him realize that the Prophet was protected against him, and that it was a constant warning from Allah because of his evil design against the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. He immediately changed and the sworn enemy turned into an honest believer. Approaching the Prophet with a penitent heart, Suraaqah begged for forgiveness in complete humility. The Prophet forgave him and confirmed it with a token written by Abu Bakr on a piece of parchment. Then Suraaqah hurried back to Makkah and tried to foil the attempts of those who went out in pursuit of the Prophet and his Companion.

Abu Bakr: the Best of the Prophet's Companions:

Ahlus-Sunnah (the Sunnis) have unanimously agreed that the best people after Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are Abu Bakr, then `Umar, then `Uthmaan, then `Ali, then the rest of the ten Companions whom the Prophet gave the glad tidings of entering Paradise, then the Companions of the Prophet who participated in the battle of Badr, then those who participated in the battle of Uhud, then those who swore the pledge of allegiance to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and the rest of the Companions. The fact that Abu Bakr As-Sideeq is the best of the Prophet's Companions is confirmed by many *Hadith*s. Here are some of them:

Ibn `Umar may Allah be pleased with him, is quoted to have said: "We used to compare Muslims in forms of who was better during the lifetime of Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him. We used to regard Abu Bakr as the best, then `Umar, and then `Uthmaan." (Reported by Al-Bukhari.)

In the version of At-Tabraani: "And when the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed about this, he found no fault with it." Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, narrates: "We, the Companions of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, used to say while we were sitting together. The best of men in the nation of Islam after the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, are Abu Bakr, then `Umar, then `Uthmaan, then we used to keep silent."(Reported by Ibn`Asaakir.)

On the authority of Muhammad, son of `Ali Ibn Abi Taalib, who said: "I asked my father, 'Who are the best people after Allah's Messenger?' He replied. 'Abu Bakr.' I then asked, 'Who is next?' He said, 'Umar.' I was afraid he would say `Uthmaan, so I said, 'Then you?' To which he said, I am but an ordinary person amongst Muslims.' "(Reported by Al-Bukhari.)

Jabir, may Allah be pleased with him, reports that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: *"Never has the sun risen nor set on a person better than Abu Bakr."* (Reported by At-Tabaraani and others.)

Sa`d Ibn Zuraarah, may Allah be pleased with him, narrates that the Prophet , peace and blessing be upon him, said: "The Holy Spirit, Gabriel has informed me that the best man of all of my nation after me will be Abu Bakr. "(Reported by At- Tabaraani.)

`Amr Ibn Al-`Aas, may Allah be pleased with him, is reported to have said: "I asked the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, 'Who is the dearest person to you amongst all of mankind?' He replied, "`Aa'ishah.' I then asked, 'Who amongst men?' He answered, 'Her father (i.e. Abu Bakr).' I asked further, 'And who is next?' He said, `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab.' The Narrator said: The Prophet then enumerated some other men. (Reported by Al-Bukhari and Moslem.)

Abu Bakr: the Bravest Companion:

`Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, is reported to have once asked the people, "Tell me who is the bravest man?" "You" replied the people. He then asked them, 'Never did I fight anyone except that I put him to rout; but tell me who is the bravest man.' The people said, 'We do not know, tell us who is he?' "Abu Bakr" replied Ali "in the battle of Badr, we built a shelter for the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and then asked who is willing to stay with the Prophet so that none of the polytheists may dare to attack the Prophet. Non of us had the courage to accept this, save for Abu Bakr who came forward sword in hand, unsheathing it over the Prophet's head; and none of the polytheists was able harm the Prophet. So he is the bravest man. `Ali added: "I saw the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, surrounded by Quraysh, threatened by some and gripped violently by the garment by others; they said: "Are you the one who calls for the unity of gods?!" `Ali said: "By Allah, none could intervene to save the Prophet but Abu Bakr: he fought, threatened and pushed them aside, while saying, 'Woe unto you! Would you kill a man because he says, My Lord is Allah?' Then he (Abu Bakr) raised his mantle over the Prophet, and wept until his beard was wet. Then `Ali said, 'Tell me by Allah, who is better: the believer of Pharaoh's people or Abu Bakr?' The people kept silent and `Ali said, 'Why do you not answer me? By Allah, a single hour spent by Abu Bakr better than a thousand hours spent by the believer of Pharaoh's people: that was a man who kept his faith secret, while this is a man who made his faith public." (Reported by Al-Bazzaar.)

Narrating another story of Abu Bakr's bravery, `Urwah Ibn Az-Zubayr, may Allah be pleased with him, says: I asked `Abdullaah Ibn `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas, "Tell me about the worst thing the disbelievers did to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him." He said, "While the Prophet was praying in the *Hijr* (roofless ceiling) of the Ka`bah, `Uqbah Ibn Abi Mu`ayt put his garment around the Prophet's neck and throttled him violently. Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, came and caught him by his shoulder and pushed him away from the Prophet and said, "Would you kill a man for saying, 'Allah is my Lord'?" (Reported by Al-Bukhari.)

`Aa'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, is reported to have said: When the number of Muslims reached thirty nine, Abu Bakr asked the permission of Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, to preach Islam publicly. On his persistent request the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, gave his consent, and all of them went to the mosque (the Ka`bah) to preach. People dispersed in the corners of the mosque, each preaching his folk. Then Abu Bakr gave a *Khutbah* (sermon); thus he was the first ever *Khateeb* (orator) to call to Allah and His Messenger. When the disbelievers heard him, they fell upon the Muslims from all sides. Abu Bakr was kicked, thrashed with shoes, trampled under feet and handled most roughly and savagely. (Reported by Ibn `Asaakir.)

`Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, is reported to have said: When Abu Bakr embraced Islam, he showed his faith openly, and called others to Allah and His Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him. (Reported by Ibn `Asaakir.)

Abu Bakr: the Most Generous Companion:

Allah the Almighty says:

"وَسَيُجَنَّبُهَا الْأَتْقَى {١٧} الَّذِي يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ يَتَزَكَّى {١٨}" (الليل ١٧-١٨)

"But those most devoted to Allah shall be removed fur from it (i.e. the Hell-Fire). Those who spent! Their wealth for increase in self purification. " (Al-Layl: 17-18) Ibn Al-Jawzi states: This verse was revealed in reference to Abu Bakr.

Abu Hurayrah may Allah be pleased with him reports that the Prophet, peace and blessing be upon him said: "I did not benefit from wealth as I benefit from the wealth of Abu Bakr." Whereupon Abu Bakr burst into tears and said, "My person and wealth are entirely at your service, O Messenger of Allah!" (Reported by Ahmad.)

`Aa'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, is reported to have said: "Abu Bakr freed seven people all of whom were tortured in the Cause of Allah. "(Reported by Ibn `Asaakir.)

`Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him, narrates: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, asked us to give out charity in Allah's Cause, and I had some wealth. Then I said, "It's time for me to outdo Abu Bakr today." So I presented half of my total wealth. The Prophet asked me, "Have you left anything for your family?" "An equal amount of it," I replied. Then came Abu Bakr with all that he had. The Prophet asked him, "O Abu Bakr! Have you left anything for your family?" "Allah and His Messenger" was the reply. I said, "Never will I outdo Abu Bakr." (Reported by At-Tirmidhi.)

Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, reports the Prophet, peace and blessing be upon him, to have said:

"Never did anyone do us a favor but was rewarded, except Abu Bakr: he did us a favor which will be rewarded only by Allah on the Day of Judgment. And I did not benefit from any wealth as I benefit from the wealth of Abu Bakr." (Reported by At-Tirmidhi.)

Abu Bakr: the Most Knowledgeable and Intelligent Companion:

An-Nawawi states in his *Tahdheeb*: Scholars have deduced that Abu Bakr is the most knowledge of the Prophet's Companions on the basis of the authentic *Hadith* reported by Al-Bukhari and Moslem: "When Allah's Messenger passed away and Abu Bakr became the caliph, some Arab renegade (reverted to disbelief). Abu Bakr, decided to declare war against them. `Umar, said to him, "How can you declare war against these people when Allah's Messenger says: *"I have been ordered (by Allah) to fight against people till they bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and if they do so their lives and property shall be protected, unless (they do acts that are punishable) is accordance with Islam, and their reckoning will be with Allah Almighty."* Abu Bakr said, "By Allah! I will fight those who distinguish between *Salaah* (prayer) and *Zakaah* (obligatory charity), because *Zakaah* is the compulsory right to be taken from one's property (according to Allah's Commands). By Allah, if they refuse to give me even the cord used for hobbling the feet of a camel, which they used to pay as *Zakaah* at the time of Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, I would fight them for withholding it." Then `Umar said, "By Allah it was nothing, but Allah guided Abu Bakr's heart towards the decision."

An-Nawawi adds: Sheikh Abu Ishaq and others quote this *Hadith* in support of their view that Abu Bakr was the last knowledgeable of the Prophet's Companions. They argue that all the companions feel short of judging the situation until Abu Bakr stated his opinion which was correct and they acted in accordance with it.

Ibn `Umar was asked, "Who amongst the Companions used to give *Fatwa* during the lifetime of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him?" He said, "Abu Bakr and `Umar, and no one else".

On the authority of Abu Sa`eed Al-Khudryy, may Allah be pleased with him: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, addressed the people saying: "There is a slave whom Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, offered the choice between the good afterworld and that which is with Him, and the slave has chosen that which is with Allah." Abu Bakr wept, and we were astonished at his weeping caused by what the Prophet mentioned. We learned later on that Allah's Messenger himself was the person who was given the choice, and that Abu Bakr knew best of all of us. Allah's Messenger added: "The most bountiful of men unto me in his companionship and his sacrifice of his wealth is Abu Bakr. If I were to choose a bosom friend, I would choose Abu Bakr – but companionship and brotherhood in faith bind us until Allah unites us in His presence. All the gates of the mosque should be closed except the gate of Abu Bakr."

Ibn Katheer maintains: As-Sideeq, may Allah be pleased with him, knew best of all of the Prophet 's Companions about the Qur'an, because the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered him to lead the other Companions in prayer, and he is reported to have said, "Let the one who recites the Qur'an best lead the people in *Salaah*.

`Aa'ishah, may Allah be pleased wit her, reports that the

Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "It is not fitting for people among whom is Abu Bakr to be led by anyone other than him. " (Reported by At-Tirmidhi.)

Abu Al-Qaasim Al-Baghawi quotes Maymoon Ibn Mahraan to have said: "When Abu Bakr was asked to judge in a certain case, he would resort to the Glorious Qur'an; if he did not find guidance, he would resort to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. If he again failed to find a solution, he would go out and ask the Muslims, "I am supposed to judge in so and so, does anyone of you remember the Prophet to have said anything concerning this case?" It used to happen that a group of people would come to him, all of whom remembered a judgment of the Prophet, in which case Abu Bakr would say, 'All praise and thanks are due to Allah, Who has made among us people who memorize the Sayings of the Prophet. If there was one who could recall a judgment of the Prophet in a case in hand, Abu Bakr would gather the people and consult them as regards the case, and if they reached a consensus he would act accordingly. `Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, used to do the same. If he failed to find guidance in the Qur'an or *Sunnah*, he would ask if Abu Bakr had passed a judgment concerning the case in question, in which case he would resort to the judgment of Abu Bakr. But if he failed to find a judgment passed by Abu Bakr, he would gather the Muslims with a view to reaching unanimity on a certain judgment.

Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, was known as the foremost genealogist of Quraysh and the best of them at interpreting dreams. He used to interpret dreams during the lifetime of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. According to Muhammad Ibn Sireen, he was the best at interpreting dreams, after the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him.

Abu Bakr, Ibn Katheer states, was the most eloquent speaker. Az-Zubayr Ibn Bakkaar is quoted to have said, "I heard some scholars say that the most eloquent speakers among the Prophet's Companions are Abu Bakr As-Sideeq and `Ali Ibn Abi Taalib, may Allah be pleased with them both. `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab is reported to have said about Abu Bakr, "He is the most knowledgeable and most conscious of Allah."

`Amr Ibn Al-`Aas, may Allah be pleased with him, quotes the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, to have said, "Gabriel has come to me and said, 'Allah orders you to consult Abu Bakr.' " (Reported by Ibn `Asaakir.)

Mu`aadh Ibn Jabal, may Allah be pleased with him narrates: When the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, wanted to send me to Yemen, he consulted some of his Companions, among whom were Abu Bakr, `Umar, `Uthmaan, `Ali, Talhah, Az-Zubayr, Usayd Ibn Hudayr. Every one of them stated his own opinion. Then the Prophet asked me, "What do you see, O Mu`aadh?" I replied, "I go with what Abu Bakr has said." To this the Prophet said, "Allah hates in His Heaven that the view of Abu Bakr be considered wrong." (Reported by At-Tabaraani, Abu Nu`aym and others.)

Abu Bakr's Steadfastness upon the Death of the Prophet:

As the Prophet's mission was completed, the time came for him to depart to his heavenly abode. He began to suffer from illness and his health deteriorated at an alarming speed.

On Monday 29th of Safar, 11 AH, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, went to Al-Baqee`, prayed for the dead, and then returned to the house of his wife Maymoonah, may Allah be pleased with her. The fever grew violent and the pain increased considerably. But, withstanding all this suffering in remarkable calmness and serenity, the Prophet led the prayer in the mosque. But he became too week and his illness worsened. He said to his wives: "Pour over me seven skins of water from different wells so that I may go out to the men and exhort them." They had him sit down in a tub belonging to Hafsah and poured water over him until he cried, "Enough, enough!" Then they helped him get dressed, bound his head, and `Ali and `Abbaas supported him to the mosque, where he sat on the pulpit and addressed the people. He said: "There is a slave whom Almighty Allah gave the choice between this world and that which is with Him, and the slave has chosen that which is with Allah." It was only Abu Bakr As-Sideeq, may Allah be pleased with him, who perceived what the Prophet meant by the choice of words. He began to cry as he knew that the Prophet was referring to himself and that the choice meant imminent death. The Prophet realized that his intimate friend, Abu Bakr, had understood him, and asked him not to cry. He said: "The most bountiful of men to me in his companionship and his sacrifice of his wealth is Abu Bakr. If I were to choose a bosom friend, I would choose Abu Bakr – but companionship and brotherhood in faith will remain between us until Allah unites us in His presence."

Al-Bukhari narrates that on the early days of Safar, 11 AH. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, went to the graves of the martyrs of Uhud and prayed for them. Then he stood on the pulpit and addressed his people: "I am to precede you and I am your witness. Your trust with me is at the Fount[4], which verity I behold from her where now I stand. I have been given the keys of worldly treasures. By Allah, I do not fear for you that you will associate partners with Allah after I pass away, but I do fear for you from this world, lest you should strike one another's necks for the acquisition of worldly gains."

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[4] This is the Fount (of abundance) which Allah mentions in *Surah, "Al-Kawthar"*. On the Day of Judgment, righteous Muslims will be allowed to drink from this Fount, after which they will not grow thirsty ever again.

It is also narrated that when the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, went to Al-Baqee` cemetery, he prayed for forgiveness for the martyrs, saying, "Peace be on you, people of the graves! Happy are you as you are so much better than men who are alive. Dissension has come like waves of the darkest nights one after the other, each worse than the previous one."

`Aa'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, narrates: When the Prophet , peace and blessings be upon him, grew seriously ill, he ordered the people to tell Abu Bakr to lead them in *S̱alaah*. But `Aa'ishah feared that it would greatly pain her father to take the place of the Prophet. So she said, "Messenger of Allah, Abu Bakr is a very sensitive man, not strong of voice and much given to weeping when he recites the Qur'an." To this, the Prophet answered, "You are even like the women that were with Joseph. Tell Abu Bakr to lead the people in *S̱alaah*."

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, lay much of the time with his head resting on `Aa'ishah's chest or lap. While bedridden and suffering severe pain, he called his daughter, Faaṯimah, and told her to sit beside him. Then he spoke to her in secret; she wept bitterly. When he found her overcome with grief, he whispered another secret to her, and this time she laughed. `Aa'ishah asked her about the secret that made her cry, but Faaṯimah refused to tell her, saying: "I am not going to disclose the secret of Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him." When the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, passed away, `Aa'ishah said to her:

"I adjure you by the right that I have upon you that you should narrate to me what the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said to you." She said: "Well, now I can tell you. The first time, the Prophet , peace and blessings be upon him, told me that he would not recover from his fatal illness and therefore I wept. The second time he told me that I would be the first of his family to join him (in Paradise), and that made me laugh."

Anas Ibn Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, also narrates: When the ailment of the Prophet aggravated, he became unconscious and then Faaṯimah said, "Oh, How distressed my father is!" Whereupon the Prophet said, "Your father will have no more distress after today."

The malady of the Prophet took a turn for the worse. His fever rose so high that his body could hardly be touched from the burning heat. His body was aching with pain, but he was too busy calling people to righteousness. Turning to his wives, who sat close by, he said: "O Faaṯimah, my daughter and you, S̱afiyyah, my aunt! Strive to do that which shall please Allah, for verily, I have no power with Him to save you in any way."

On the 11th of Rabee` Al-Awwal, the fever and pain had somewhat abated and he recovered slightly, regaining a little strength. The Prophet, hearing the call to prayer, decided to go to the mosque. The prayer had already begun when he entered and Muslims were almost distracted from the joy at seeing the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. But Allah's Messenger motioned them to continue. Abu Bakr had been conscious of the stir behind him, and he realized that the Prophet must have entered the mosque. Without turning his head, Abu Bakr stepped back, but the Prophet placed his hand on his shoulder and pushed him forward gently as a sign that he should continue leading Muslims in *S̱alaah*. When he finished, the Prophet sat on the pulpit and addressed his devoted Companions: "By Allah, I have not made anything lawful except that which Allah has declared lawful, nor have I declared anything unlawful except that which Allah has deemed unlawful."

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, seemed exhausted, so he returned to `Aa'ishah's house accompanied by two of his Companions. As the day advanced, his health failed rapidly. `Aa'ishah, seeing he was too frail, raised his head from the pillow and placed it on her lap. She kept moistening his forehead with a damp cloth. The fever was very high. But the noble Prophet remained calm and never complained. He had resigned to the will of Allah and repeated the following words over and over again: "In the company of those on whom is the Grace of Allah."

He, peace and blessings be upon him, felt as if he was drifting towards the inevitable end. Though going through the throes of death, he did not for a moment lose courage. He kept on beseeching Allah to help him: "O Lord! I implore You seeking Your help through the agony of death."

At this point, `Aa'ishah's brother, `Abdur-Rahmaan, entered the room with a green *Siwaak* (a tooth stick) in his hand, while `Aa'ishah was supporting the Prophet 's back against her chest. Seeing the Prophet 's eyes resting on it (i.e. the *Siwaak*), she knew that he wanted it. So she said to him, "Shall I take it for you?" He nodded in agreement. She took it from her brother, but it was too stiff for him to use. "Shall I soften it for you?" she said. He nodded in approval. She chewed it a little to make it soft and pliable. Then she gave it to the Prophet, who brushed his teeth with it vigorously despite his failing health.

His strength had declined rapidly and he was heard saying, "O Allah, grant me pardon and join me with companionship on high." He also murmured, "Nay, the most Exalted Companion in Paradise." Then he said, "*Salaah, Salaah*! The persons who have been entrusted to your care!" This, he repeated several times. He began to lose consciousness and his strength diminished. He opened his eyes wide open and he said clearly: "Lord! Blessed is the companionship on high." His limbs went limp and he fell into `Aa'ishah's lap. She fixed her eyes upon him anxiously, almost hoping to get a response from him but she found to her great sorrow that the faint suggestion of a smile, which relaxed her husband's lips, did not belong to this world. The Prophet , peace and blessings be upon him, by then had returned to the companionship of the One on high. That was on Monday 12th, Rabee` Al-Awwal, in 11 AH.

When the news of the Prophet's death spread to all corners of the city, consternation blazed through the ranks of the people. Some wept bitterly, some were speechless, and some disbelieved the news of his death holding that he had experienced a swoon. `Umar Ibn Al Khattaab stood up and said, "Some hypocrites think that Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has died; but Muhammad is not dead. However, he has gone to his Lord as Moses, son of `Imraan, had gone to his Lord, and he had been absent from his people forty nights, and he (Moses) returned to them after it was said that he had died. By Allah, the Prophet will return as Moses had returned, and he will surely cut off the hands and feet of men who allege that he is dead."

Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, was not present when the Prophet , peace and blessings be upon him, breathed his last. `Aa'ishah relates: Abu Bakr came from his house at As-Sunh (where he lived) on a horse. He dismounted and passed through the mosque disregarding the crowds that pressed past him. He walked onwards into the house of `Aa'ishah where the Prophet, peace and blessing be upon him, was lying. He then uncovered the Prophet 's face, knelt down and kissed him. With his eyes flooded in tears, he said: "May my father and mother be ransom for you. By Allah, you have tasted death which Allah has decreed; a second death will never overtake you."

He then went out while `Umar was still talking to the people, and he said, "Gently, Umar, calm down." But `Umar did not listen to him so Abu Bakr moved towards the people who had thronged round him and addressed them saying: "O people, let whoever worships Muh̲ammad know the Muh̲ammad is surely dead, and let whoever worships Allah know that Allah is alive and shall never die." He then recited the verse:

"وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلاَّ رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِن قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَإِن مَّاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَى أَعْقَابِكُمْ وَمَن
يَنقَلِبْ عَلَىَ عَقِبَيْهِ فَلَن يَضُرَّ اللّهَ شَيْئًا وَسَيَجْزِي اللّهُ الشَّاكِرِينَ" (آل عمران: ١٤٤)

"Muh̲ammad is no more than a Messenger: many were the Messengers that passed away before him. If he died or were slain, will ye then turn back on your heels? If any did turn back on his heels, not the least harm will he do to Allah; but Allah (on the other hand) will swiftly reward those who (serve Him) with gratitude." (Ali `Imraan: 144)

This short sermon brought solace to the wounded hearts of Muslims and they submitted with cheerful resignation to the will of Allah. `Umar is reported to have said: "By Allah, when I heard Abu Bakr recite that verse, it was as if I had never heard it before. I was dumbfounded to the extent that my legs could not carry me and I fell to the ground knowing that the Prophet was indeed dead."

Ibn `Abbaas is reported to have said: "By Allah, it was as if the people never knew that Allah had revealed this verse till Abu Bakr recited it and all the people received it from him, and I heard everybody reciting it (then).

Abu Bakr's Scrupulous Conscience:

Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, never ate unlawful food. It is said that he had a slave who used to give him a portion of his daily income as the master's share. Once he brought him some food, and Abu Bakr took a morsel out of it. Then the slave said to him: "You always inquired about the source of what I bring to you, but today you have not done so." Abu Bakr replied: "I felt so hungry that I failed to do that. Tell me now, whence did you bring this food?" The slave said: "Before embracing Islam, I practised soothsaying. During these days, I came across some people for whom I practised some of my charms. They promised to pay me for that later on. I happened to pass by those people today, while they were engaged in a marriage ceremony, and they gave me this food. On saying this, Abu Bakr exclaimed, "Ah! You would have surely killed me?" Then he tried to disgorge the morsel he had swallowed, but he could not do so, as his stomach had been quite empty. Somebody suggested to him to take water to his fill and then retch it. Thereupon Abu Bakr sent for a goblet of water and kept on taking water and forcing it out, till he vomited out the morsel.

Somebody remarked: "May Allah have mercy on you! You put yourself to such a trouble for a single morsel." To this Abu Bakr replied: "I would have thrust it out even if I had to lose my life, for I heard the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, say: *"Any flesh which has grown out of unlawful* *earnings will not enter Paradise."* I, therefore, made haste to clear my stomach of this morsel, lest any portion of my body should receive nourishment from it."(Reported by Abu Nu`aym.)

Abu Bakr's Utter Fear of Allah:

According to our belief, Abu Bakr As-Siddeeq, may Allah be pleased with him, is the most exalted person after the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. The Prophet conveyed to him the glad tidings that his name shall be called out from all the gates of Paradise, and that he will be the first of his followers to enter it. With all these virtues and privileges, he used to say, "I wish I were a tree that would be cut and done away with." Sometimes he said, "I wish I were a blade of grass whose life ended with the grazing of some beast." This reflects his utter fear of Allah and his apprehension of reckoning on the Day of Judgement.

Abu Ahmad Al-Haakim reports on the authority of Mu`aadh Ibn Jabal who said: One day Abu Bakr entered a garden where he saw a bird standing under the shade of a tree. He sighed deeply and said: "O bird, how lucky you are! You eat from trees and take shade under them; when you die you do not have fear of reckoning on the Day of Judgement. I wish I were just like you."

Al-Asma`i narrates: When Abu Bakr was praised he used to say: "O Allah! You know me better than I do, I know myself better than them. O Allah! Let me better than I think I am, forgive me for what they do not know, and do not hold me accountable for what they say."(Reported by Ibn `Asaakir.)

On the authority of Qatadah who says: "I was told that Abu Bakr said, 'I wish I were a plant eaten by animals."(Reported by Ahmad.)

Abu `Imraan Al-Jawni reports that Abu Bakr said: "I wish I were just a hair in the body of a devout *Mu'min* (believer)."(Reported by Ahmad.)

Ahmad narrates on the authority of Mujaahid who said: "When Ibn Az-Zubayr used to stand for *Salaah* he used to look like a "stick" out of his extreme devoutness and piety. And I was told that Abu Bakr was like him."

On the authority of Damurah Ibn Habeeb who says: "When one of Abu Bakr's son was dying, he kept looking at a cushion, so they pushed him away from the cushion and found five or six dinars under it. Abu Bakr said: "To Allah we belong, and to Him is our return! I do not think you can bear the burden of that sin."(Reported by Ahmad.)

Ibn Sa`d narrates on the authority of Ibn Sireen who said: "Ever since the demise of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, no one has been known to be most conscious in giving judgement about matters that he did not know, except Abu Bakr, and no body was so conscious of Allah like Abu Bakr, except `Umar. When Abu Bakr used to have a case that is not referred to in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, he used to say: "I tried to arrive at the right opinion through my own personal judgement; if it is right, it is Allah's Favor, and if it is wrong, it is my fault and I pray to Allah to forgive me."

Abu Bakr Never Reveals the Prophet's Secrets:

`Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him, narrates: "When Hafsah Bint `Umar became a widow after the death of (her husband) Khunays Ibn Hudhafah As-Sahmyy who had been one of the Companions of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and he died at Madeenah. I went to `Uthmaan Ibn `Affaan and offered him the hand of Hafsah (for marriage). He said, "I will think it over." I waited for a few days, then he met me and said, 'It seems that it is not possible for me to marry at present.'"

`Umar added, "I met Abu Bakr As-Siddeeq and said to him, 'If you wish, I will give my daughter Hafsah in marriage to you." Abu Bakr kept silent and did not say any word to me in reply. I got more furious with him than with `Uthmaan. I waited for a few days, and then Allah's Messenger asked for her hand, and I gave her in marriage to him. Afterwards I met Abu Bakr who said to me, 'Perhaps you got angry with me when you offered Hafsah in marriage to me, and I did not give you a reply?' I said, 'Yes.' Abu Bakr said, 'Nothing prevented me to respond to your proposal except that I knew that Allah's Messenger had mentioned her, and I never wanted to let out the secret of Allah's Messenger. And if Allah's Messenger had refused her, I would have accepted her.' " (Reported by Al-Bukhari.)

Abu Bakr's Tender Heart:

On the authority of `Aa'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, who says: "I had seen my parents practicing Islam since I attained the age of puberty. Not a day passed but the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, visited us, both in the morning and the evening. My father Abu Bakr thought of building a mosque in the courtyard of his house, and he did so. He used to pray and recite the Qur'an in it. The polytheist women and their children used to gather around him and look at him astonishingly. Abu Bakr was a softhearted man and could not help weeping while reciting the Qur'an. The chiefs of the Quraysh disbelievers became afraid of that (i.e. that their children and women might be affected by the recitation of Qur'an)." (Reported by Al-Bukhari.)

Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, reports that after the death of Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Bakr said to `Umar, "Let us visit Umm Ayman as Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, used to visit her." When they went to her, she wept. They (Abu Bakr and `Umar) said to her, "What makes you weep? What is in store (in the next world) for Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, is better than (this worldly life)." She said, "I weep not because I am ignorant of the fact that what is in store for Allah's Messenger (in the next world) is better than (this worldly life), but I weep because the Divine Revelation has ceased to come from Heaven. This moved both of them to tears and they began to weep along with her." (Reported by Moslem.)

Abu Bakr's Interpretation of Dreams:

Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, was an acknowledged interpreter of dreams. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, himself used to consult only him for interpreting his dreams.

Sa`eed Ibn Mansoor narrates on the authority of Sa`eed Ibn Al-Musayyib who said: "`Aa'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, saw in a dream that three moons fell in her house. So she narrated her dream to Abu Bakr – who was the best interpreter of dreams – he said: "If you have truly seen that, then three of the best of all Allah's creation will be buried in your house." When the Prophet , peace and blessings be upon him, died, Abu Bakr said to `Aa'ishah, "This is the best of your three moons."

Sa`eed Ibn Mansoor also narrates on the authority of `Umar Ibn Sharahabeel who said: "The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "I saw that I was followed by black sheep then I was followed by white sheep that outnumbered the black ones in a way that you could hardly see the black ones. Abu Bakr interpreted the dreams saying: "O Prophet of Allah, the black sheep stand for the Arabs who will embrace Islam in large numbers, and the white sheep stand for the non-Arabs who will embrace Islam in far larger numbers than the Arabs. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "That was exactly how the angel interpreted it before dawn."

Ibn Sa`eed further narrates on the authority of Ibn Shihaab who said: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, saw a dream and narrated it to Abu Bakr. He said: "I saw in a dream that we were racing and I was ahead of you by steps. "Abu Bakr said, "You will die and rest in peace in Heaven, and I will live two years and a half after your passing away.

On the authority of Abu Qilaabah who says: A man said to Abu Bakr As-Sideeq, "I saw in a dream that I urinate blood." Whereupon Abu Bakr said, "You are a man who copulates with his wife in the time of her menses, so seek Allah's Forgiveness and do not do this again."

Verses, *Hadiths* and *Scholars* Saying Referring to Abu Bak's Caliphate:

On the authority of Hudhayfah, may Allah be pleased with him, who quotes the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, as saying: "Among those who will succeed me, follow Abu Bakr and `Umar." (Reported by At-Tirmidhi and Al-

Haakim.)

Jubayr Ibn Mut`am, may Allah be pleased with him, reports: "A woman came to the Prophet, peace and blessing be upon him, to ask him about something, but he told her to come some other time. She said, "O Messenger of Allah! What if I come but do not find you? It seemed as if she meant that he might die?" The Prophet said, "If you do not find me, then go to Abu Bakr." (Reported by Al- Bukhari and Moslem.)

Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, narrates: "Banu Al-Mustaliq sent me to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to ask him to who would they pay alms after the Prophet's demise. I went to the Prophet to ask him about this, and he said to me, "To Abu Bakr." (Reported by Al-Haakim.)

`Aa'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, reports that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, said to her in his (last) illness.' *"Call Abu Bakr, your father and your brother too, so that I may write a document, for he fear lest someone else might be desirous (of succeeding me) and (that some claimant might say, 'I have better claim to it, whereas Allah and the believers do not substantiate the claim of anyone but that of Abu Bakr.* "(Reported by Moslem.)

Ibn Abu Mulaykah reports that `Aa'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, was asked about the person Allan's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, would have nominated his successor if he had to nominate one at all. She said, "Abu Bakr." It was said to her, "Then who after Abu Bakr?" "Umar,' she replied. It was said to her, 'Then who after `Urnar?" She said, `Abu `Ubaydah Ibn Al-Jarraah, and then she kept silent. (Reported by Moslem.)

Abu Moosa Al-Ash`aryy, may Allah be pleased with him, narrates: "The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, fell ill and when his illness aggravated, he said, *"Tell Abu Bakr to lead the people in Salaah."* ` Aa'ishah said, "O Messenger of Allah, "Abu Bakr is a softhearted man, he would not be able to lead the *Salaah* in your place." The Prophet said again, *"Tell Abu Bakr to lead the people in Salaah."* She repeated the same reply, and the Prophet said: *"Tell Abu Bakr to lead the people in Salaah. You are even as the women who were with Prophet Yoosuf (Joseph)."* So the Messenger of Allah went to Abu Bakr (with that order), and he led the people in *Salaah* in the lifetime of the Prophet. (Reported by Al-Bukhari and Moslem.)

Scholars have deduced the reference to Abu Bakr's caliphate from some verses of the Qur'an. Al-Hasan Al-Basri, commenting on the verse:

"يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ مَن يَرْتَدَّ مِنكُمْ عَن دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ أَذِلَّةٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٍ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلاَ يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لآئِمٍ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ(المائدة: ٥٤)

"O ye who believe if any from among you turn back from his Faith, soon will Allah produce a people whom He will love as they will love Him, lowly with the Believers, mighty against the rejecters, fighting in the way of Allah, and never afraid of the reproaches of such as find fault. That is the Grace of Allah, which he will bestow on whom he pleaseth. And Allah encompasseth all, and he knoweth all things." (Al-Maa'idah: 54), he said: "By Allah, they are Abu Bakr and his companions. When some Arabs relinquished Islam after the death of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Bakr and his Companions fought them until hey returned back to Islam.

Abu Bakr Elected Caliph:

It is reported that `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him, addressed the people, upon his return from *Hajj*, saying: "I have heard that someone said, 'If `Umar were dead, I would pledge allegiance to such-and-such person.' No one should deceive himself by saying that the election of Abu Bakr was an unpremeditated affair (*Faltah*) which was ratified. Admittedly it was so; However, Allah averted any evil which might have resulted from it. There is none amongst you to whom people would devote themselves as they did to Abu Bakr who was the best of us.

It happened that when Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, passed away, `Ali and Az-Zubayr and their Companions withdrew from us in the house of Faatimah, and the *Ansaar* opposed us and assembled with their chiefs in the hall (*Saqeefah*) of Banu Saa`idah; while the *Muhajireen* gathered around Abu Bakr. `Umar continued: "I told Abu Bakr that we should go to our brothers, the *Ansaar*, when two righteous men met us and told us the conclusion the people had come to. They asked us, "Where are you going, O people of the *Muhajireen*?" I replied, 'To our brothers, the *Ansaar*.' They told us that there was no need of approaching them, and that we must make our own decision. I said, 'By Allah, we will go to them; we found them in the hall of Banu Saa`idah. In the middle of the hall was a man wrapped up in a cloak. I asked who that man was, and the people answered that he was Sa`d Ibn `Ubadah. I wondered, 'What's wrong with him?' 'He is ill,' came the answer. When we sat down, their orator stood up to address the assembly. He praised and thanked Allah as He deserves, and then said: "We are the Helpers (*Ansaar*) of Allah and the battalion of Islam; and you, O *Muhajireen* are a family of ours and a group of your people have settled amongst us. You are trying to cut us off from our origin and wrest authority from us." When he finished, I wanted to speak, because I had prepared a speech which pleased me much, and wanted to deliver it before Abu Bakr. I was trying to soften a certain asperity of his, but he (Abu Bakr) was more forbearing and wiser than I was. He said, 'Gently, `Umar!' I did not like to anger him so I allowed him to speak. He is a man with more knowledge than I, and by Allah he did not omit a single word which I had thought of, and he uttered it in his inimitable way better than I could have done. The orator said: "Truly, you deserve all the good you have said about yourselves, but the Arabs will never accept the authority of anyone other than a man of this clan of Quraysh; they being the best of the Arabs as regards descent and country. I offer you one of these two men. Pledge allegiance to whichever of these you please." Thus saying he took hold of my hand and that of Abu `Ubaydah Ibn Al-Jarraah who was sitting amongst us. Nothing he said displeased me more than that (proposal). By Allah, I would rather have come forward and have my neck chopped off – if that were no sin – than become the ruler of a people of whom Abu Bakr was one.

One of the *Ansaar* said: "I am the rubbing post and the fruitful propped-up palm[5]. Let us have two rulers: one from us and another from you, O people of Quraysh." Altercation waxed hotter and voices were raised until I was afraid lest a complete disunity should take place, so I said, 'Stretch out your hand, O Abu Bakr. He did so and I paid him homage, then the *Muhajireen* swore the pledge of allegiance and so did the *Ansaar* afterwards.

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[5] I.e. a man who can cure people's ills and is held in high esteem on account of his great experience and good counsel. (trans.)

`Umar added: "By Allah, there was no grater problem than the election of Abu Bakr; we were afraid that if we left the people, they might pledge allegiance after us to one of their men, in which case we would have given them our consent for something against our real wish, or would have opposed them and stirred commotion. So if anyone pledge allegiance to someone without consulting other Muslims, then the one he has selected should not be given allegiance, lest both of them should be killed."

On the authority of Ibn Mas`ood, may Allah be pleased with him, who says: Upon the demise of Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, the *Anṣaar* suggested that there should be two leaders (one from the *Anṣaar* and another from the *Muhajireen*), until finally `Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭaab intervened, saying: "O people of the *Anṣaar*, know you not that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered Abu Bakr to lead the people in *Ṣalaah*? Which of you will willingly take precedence over Abu Bakr?" Thereupon the *Anṣaar* said, "Allah forbid that we should take precedence over Abu Bakr!"

Ibn Isḥaaq states: Az-Zuhri told me on the authority of Anas Ibn Malik: On the morrow of Abu Bakr's election in the hall (of Banu Saa`idah), he (Abu Bakr) sat in the pulpit, and `Umar rose to his feet and spoke before him. He praised and thanked Allah as He deserves, and then said: "O people, yesterday I said something which I do not find in the Book of Allah, nor was it something which the Prophet of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, entrusted to me; but I thought that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, would order our affairs (until) he was the last of us (alive). Allah has left His Book with you, through which He guided His Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, and if you hold fast to it, Allah will guide you as He guided him. Allah has placed your affairs in the hands of the best of you, the Companion of Allah's Messenger, and the "*second of the two who were in the cave*". So arise and pledge allegiance to him. Thereupon the people pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr, after the pledge in the hall (of Banu Saa`idah).

The First Address:

Then Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, got up, praised and thanked Allah as He deserves, and then addressed the assembly thus: "O people, I have been given authority over you, yet I am not the best of you. If I do well, give me your support, and if I do wrong, set me right. Truth is loyalty, and lying is treachery. The weak amongst you shall be strong in my eyes, until I secure his rights, *Insha-Allah* (Allah willing); and the strong amongst you shall be weak in my eyes, until I wrest from him the rights of others, *Insha-Allah*. If a people give up *Jihad* in the Cause of Allah, Allah will smite them with humiliation. And if obscenity permeates among a people, Allah will inflict calamities upon them. Obey me as long as I obey Allah and His Messenger, and if I disobey Allah and His Messenger, you owe me no obedience. Arise for *S̱alaah*, Allah have mercy upon you!"

Such was the Magna Charta the first Caliph of Islam, granted his people on the first day of his assuming post, without request.

Abu Bakr Sends out Usamah's Punitive Expedition:

Some weeks before his death, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, nominated Usamah Ibn Zayd, aged seventeen years then, to lead an expedition against the Levant.

He was to avenge the death of his father, Zayd, the freed slave of the Prophet , peace and blessings be upon him. Zayd was killed by the Levantines in the battle of Mu`tah. The preparations of the expedition were under way when the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, fell seriously ill and later passed away. That held up Usamah's expedition for some weeks.

As soon as Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, assumed the Caliphate, the first thing he thought of was the dispatch of Usamah's punitive expedition. The death of the Prophet led some people to think that the light of Islam was fading away, and that many tribes that had entered the fold of Islam only a short time before were by no means firm in faith and many of them had started to show signs of bolting out of the fold of Islam. All this showed that things were not going to be easy at all for the incumbent Caliph, Abu Bakr.

However, Abu Bakr had to carry out the commands of the Prophet at all costs. He was determined to send out the expedition initiated by the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him. Some of the Companions suggested to Abu Bakr to better drop the idea for the time being claiming that the time was not ripe for that as trouble was brewing all around, and as such it was unwise to send troops out when they were urgently needed to quell the situation at home. However, Abu Bakr would not listen to all this, rather, he said: "How can I fold up the flag which the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, himself unfurled?"

Then someone suggested that Usamah was too raw to lead the expedition, and that it was wiser to put a more experienced man in command. The suggestion caused Abu Bakr to get furious and said: "How can I dismiss a man whom the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, appointed?"

So the troops marched out under the command of Usamah, about three weeks after the passing away of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, accompanied Usamah some distance out of Madeenah. The youthful commander was riding a horse, while the Caliph walked by his side to boost his morale and give his soldiers more confidence in him. Usamah said, "O successor of the Prophet, what about you getting on the horse while I get down to walk beside you?" "By Allah," replied Abu Bakr, "I will agree to neither of the two things. What harm is there if a little dust covers my feet, while I go some steps in the Cause of Allah? For every step one takes in Allah's Cause one gets the reward of seven hundred good deeds."

When Abu Bakr needed `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him, who was then one of the men under Usamah's command, to stay behind at Madeenah for purpose of consultation, he made a request to Usamah to allow `Umar stay behind, and Usamah agreed to his request.

Before bidding Muslim army farewell, Caliph Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, gave them useful advice and final instruction which serves as a code of conduct in war and this remains unsurpassed to this day, as they are still taught to school children throughout the Muslim World. Among those instructions were: "Never be dishonest nor treacherous. Do not steal from the booty you lay your hands on. Do not mutilate the dead bodies of the enemy. Do not kill the aged, children and women. Do not burn date-palms. Do not cut down fruit trees. Do not slaughter goats, or cows, or camel, except for nutritional purposes. You will come across people who have taken to asceticism and sitting in monasteries, so leave them alone."

Usamah's expedition proved very successful, as he raided the frontier districts of the Levant and was back in Madeenah after forty days.

The expedition had another good result. It proved an eye-opener to those who thought that Islam was dying out. They had a clear proof that Islam was still able to challenge one of the greatest powers of the world. This overawed the wavering tribes, and some of the tribes which had left Islam actually re-entered its fold.

Wars of Apostasy:

The consecutive victories of Muslims during the lifetime of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, had the great impact of bringing many tribes that lived faraway from Madeenah to the fold of Islam. Some of these tribes embraced Islam in admiration of the victory achieved by Muslims, some embraced it in order to gain some worldly benefit, and some accepted Islam out of deep faith and profound conviction. This means that a great number of Muslims had not yet got rid of the remnants of *Jahiliyyah*, particularly the manners and behaviors which characterized the people before Islam. Some Muslims were still plagued with racism and pride, that give rise to hatred and ill-feelings among tribes that brought them back to their pre-Islamic manners. Thus, the Islamic creed was not yet well-established in the hearts of some Muslims. Allah Almighty says:

"قَالَتِ الأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا قُل لَّمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِن قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَإِن تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لا يَلِتْكُم مِّنْ أَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ" (سورة الحجرات: ١٤)

"The desert Arabs say, "We believe." Say, "Ye have no Faith; but ye (only) say, 'We have submitted our wills to Allah,' for not yet has Faith entered your hearts. But if ye obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not belittle aught oft your deeds: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."" (Al-Hujoraat: 14)

That is why when `Uyaynah Ibn Hisn, the chief of the tribe of Bani Fazarah, said when he supported Tulayhah, who claimed Prophet hood: "A Prophet from the two allies (i.e. the tribes of Asad and Ghatafaan) is far more better to us than a Prophet from Quraysh."

The spirit of racism of *Jahilliyah* reached its climax in some people who went to extreme and claimed to be Prophet s, in order to gain some pride and rank among their people not less than what Quraysh enjoyed when Islam prevailed in the lifetime of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. This is attributed to their misunderstanding of Islam, the religion which does not distinguishes between Quraysh and other tribes, even if they are non-Arabs.

Thus, Al-Aswad Al-`Ansi, began to convince the tribe of Mudhajaj that he was a Prophet who received revelation from Heaven, and was supported by some of his people; Musaylamah Al-Khadhaab (the liar) claimed Prophet hood in the tribe of Banu Haeefah; and Tulayhah Al-Asadyy in the tribe of Banu Asad also claimed to be a Prophet; likewise, Sajaah claimed Prophet hood in the tribe of Banu Tameem.

No doubt these false claims were one way or the other supported by Muslim enemies who lost their influence and status and failed to perceive the light of Islam and grasp the noble teachings it conveyed. Falling in this mistake also were Jews whose disloyalty and insincerity wreaked havoc on them.

The same thing happened neighboring countries. The Romans and Persians felt threatened by the upsurging power of Islam on the international arena; thus they found it a great opportunity to pour fuel into the already flamed situation, in order to save themselves from being annihilated by Muslims.

Then came the death of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, to encourage the false Prophet s and their followers to cling to their claims and to sacrifice their lives for their sake. As for Arab tribes close to Madeenah such as `Abs, Dhabyaan, and Ghatafaan, they demanded that they should be relieved of the obligation to pay *Zakaah*, because they claimed it was only a tax to be paid to Quraysh.

Fighting the *Zakaah* Withholders:

The tribes of Murrah, `Abs, Tha`labah Ibn Sa`d, and Kinanah, assembled at Abraq and Dhul Qissah close to Madeenah, and sent a deputation to Abu Bakr As-Sideeq, may Allah be pleased with him, to tell him that with the passing away of the Prophet , peace and blessings be upon him, they be exempted from paying *Zakaah*. Abu Bakr consulted his advisers. Almost all the eminent companions around Abu Bakr advised that as the Muslims were hemmed in by danger from all sides, it was expedient that the demand of the tribes should be accepted so that there was no defection from Islam. Even `Umar Ibn al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him, known for his strong attitudes, favored the acceptance of the demand of the tribes, in view of the impending danger.

The question became a matter of great concern for Abu Bakr. He was conscious of the gravity of the situation, and was aware of the danger to which the Muslim community was exposed. But he did not overlook the other side of the picture.

Abu Bakr felt that the very basis on which the demand had been raised was open to attack. It was incorrect to hold that Islam was a matter of agreement between the Prophet and the tribes, and that after his passing away this agreement had abated and was open to revision. Islam is a covenant with Allah, and as Allah exists, the passing away of the Prophet after the fulfillment of his mission did not in any way, affect their allegiance to Islam. Islam meant total faith, and such faith could not be made subject to any conditions.

As regards the demand for the exemption from paying *Zakaah*, Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, felt that if he conceded to the demand, that might ease the situation temporarily, but that could in turn lead to other demands, and after having accepted one demand it would be difficult to refuse other demands. If any concession was once given in consideration of tribal loyalties, that would be subversive of the solidarity of Islam. Abu Bakr felt that as the successor of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, it was his duty to safeguard Islam, and as such he could not follow a policy of appeasement likely to compromise Islam in any way.

Another consideration that weighed with Abu Bakr was that *Zakaah* is not a levy subject to political considerations; it is an imperative injunction ordained by Allah, and equated with *Salaah*.

The matter of fact position was that where Almighty Allah and the Prophet left any matter to the discretion of the community, the community could take such action as might be necessary on the basis of expediency, but where the command of Allah or the Prophet is definite and conclusive, it is absolute and mandatory, and it could not be compromised or modified because of any considerations of necessity or expediency. After considering all aspects of the case, Abu Bakr came to the conclusion that he had no jurisdiction to grant an exemption from *Zakaah*, and that as the successor of the Prophet , peace and blessings be upon him, it devolved on him to enforce the command of Allah in letter as well as in spirit, and not to seek to modify it for one reason or the other. Abu Bakr's judgment, therefore, was that under the circumstances, he had no option but to refuse the demand of the tribes. This conviction strengthened his determination to stand firm, and to refuse to compromise Islam.

Abu Bakr took `Umar and other companions into confidence. `Umar tried to insist on his previous advice of giving the concession, but as Abu Bakr unfolded his arguments step by step, all the companions came round to the view that the truth was what Abu Bakr said.

When on the following day, Abu Bakr met the delegation of the tribes, he explained to them the philosophy of paying *Zakaah*. He brought home to them the point that he had no jurisdiction to grant any concession in respect of a matter which was a mandate of Almighty Allah. He explained to them that if they professed Islam, they had to observe all the injunctions and dictates of Islam in toto. There was no half way house in Islam, and it was not permissible for them to pick and choose Islam according to their whims and caprices. Islam had either to be rejected or accepted, and there was no room in Islam for any compromise on fundamentals. Abu Bakr argued that *Zakaah* being a fundamental injunction of Islam had to be paid with good grace, and any refusal to pay *Zakaah* implied apostasy. In unequivocal terms Abu Bakr declared: "By Allah! I will fight those who distinguish between Salaah and *Zakaah* (obligatory charity), because *Zakaah* is the compulsory right to be taken from one's property (according to Allah's Commands). By Allah, if they refuse to give me even the cord used for hobbling the feet of a camel, which they used to pay as *Zakaah* at the time of Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, I would fight them for withholding it." Then `Umar said, "By Allah there was no doubt that Allah guided Abu Bakr's heart towards the decision to fight them, which I later found was the truth."

The Battle of Dhul Qissah:

When Abu Bakr rejected the demand of the tribes to absolve them of the obligation to pay *Zakaah*, they took such refusal as a challenge. Islam sat lightly on them, and tribal feelings were most dominant in them. They accordingly decided that if Islam involved the payment of *Zakaah* to Madeenah, they would prefer to forego Islam, rather than yield to the dictates of the authorities in Madeenah.

During their stay in Madeenah, the delegates of the tribes saw for themselves that with the march of the main Muslim army under Usamah to the Levant, there was hardly any fighting force with the Muslims in Madeenah, and as such the city was vulnerable. When the delegates returned to their tribes, and gave an account of what Abu Bakr had said, they incited them to fight him. They decided to attack Madeenah when the main Muslim army was away, and teach the then authorities a lesson. The tribes concentrated their forces at Dhul Hissa and Dhul Qissah to the north east of Madeenah on the way to Najd, and decided to launch the attack against Madeenah.

When the delegates of the tribes left Madeenah in a sullen mood, Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, discerned that they meant mischief, and that an attack by the tribes was imminent. He immediately gave orders to Muslims to make their arrangements for the defense of Madeenah. Strong pickets under Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed, Az-Zubayr, Talhah, `Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn Awf, `Abdullaah Ibn Mas`ood and `Ali

Ibn Abi Taalib, may Allah be pleased with them, were posted at strategic approaches to the city. These pickets were required to remain at their posts, and to make immediate report to the Caliph about the movements of the tribes. All the adult male Muslims were asked to assemble in the Prophet 's mosque, where Abu Bakr As-Sideeq, may Allah be pleased with him, informed them of the impending danger of an attack from the tribes, and asked them to do their duty to Islam. He brought home to them the point that if they staked their everything in the way of Allah, Allah would come to their help as He had helped them during the lifetime of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. He said to them: "The delegation noticed that your number are few, and you do not know whether they will attack you by day or at night, and they are not far from you, so be on your guard and make arrangements." A roster of all Muslim male adults in the city was prepared, and their turns for keeping the vigil during the nights were fixed.

After three days, the withholders of *Zakaah* made brisk movement in the camp of the tribes at Dhul Hissah. The Muslim scouts brought intelligence that the tribes planned to attack Madeenah that night. Abu Bakr collected all the Muslim male adults in the mosque. After *Salaatul-`Ishaa'* (night prayer) these men were required to spread out in groups to keep vigil in the various quarters of the city. At the head of a contingent Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, took position at a strategic point in the direction of Dhul Hissah from where the attack was expected.

The tribes launched the attack at midnight. They had hoped that they would take the city by surprise; and that as there was no fighting force in Madeenah, they would meet no resistance, and it would be an easy walk-over for them. As the tribal force advanced in the darkness of the night fully assured of their victory, the contingent of Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, leapt on the advancing horde, and took them unawares. Many tribesmen fell victims to the swords of the Muslims; the rest fled in utter confusion.

The Muslims chased the enemy and advanced to Dhul Hissah. Here the retreating tribesmen were joined by their reserves. In the battle at Dhul Hissah, the Muslims though few in number, fought with grim determination. As a stratagem the tribesmen threw inflated water skins in the path of the Muslim army, and that frightened the camels on which the Muslims were riding; the camels did not rest till they reached Madeenah. The tribes felt jubilant at what they regarded as the repulse of the Muslims. Thinking that all was over, the tribes retired to their camps at Dhul Hissah and Dhul Qissah.

Back in Madeenah, Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, rallied the Muslim forces, and mustered all available reserves to attack the enemy. In the late hours of the night, the Muslim forces rushed out of the city, and led a violent attack against the enemy at Dhul Hissah. The tribal forces were taken unawares and they retreated to Dhul Qissah. The Muslims pursued them to Dhul Qissah. There was fighting at Dhul Qissah but the tribal force could not withstand the fury of the attack of the Muslims. Many tribesmen were cut to pieces. Those who survived fled in confusion. Before the day dawned the Muslims had won a victory and they were the masters of Dhul Qissah. Abu Bakr was on the vanguard of the Muslim army, and when his men said to him: "O successor of Allah's Messenger, do not expose your life to danger, for if you are harmed there would be no guide for Muslims, so send a man in your behalf, and if he is killed send another one." Thereupon Abu Bakr said, "Nay, By Allah I will never do this, nor will I sacrifice your souls to save myself." Such was the ideal Abu Bakr, who fought in defense of Islam in the absence of Usamah Ibn Zayd from Madeenh.

The battle of Dhul Qissah had many good consequences. The victory of Dhul Qissah was the first significant event of the caliphate of Abu Bakr As-Sideeq, may Allah be pleased with him. When Abu Bakr returned to Madeenah from Dhul Qissah he was acclaimed as a hero, a worthy successor of the Prophet. In the midst of the most adverse circumstances he remained firm and never lost faith. By his superb leadership he had averted the threat to the city of Madeenah. By refusing to compromise on principles in spite of heavy odds, he established that he was made of stuff that characterize heroes.

Another important consequence of the battle of Dhul Qissah was that it crystallized the issues. Heretofore there were tribes which favored Islam, but still wavered in their allegiance to Madeenah. Again there were tribes which preferred to sit on the fence and watch developments. After the battle of Dhul Qissah, many tribes sent their delegations to Madeenah, swore allegiance to the authorities in Madeenah and paid *Zakaah*. The tribes that did not favor Islam openly apostatized. Henceforward the issue was not between Muslims and Muslims; the issue was between the, Muslims and the apostates. The battle of Dhul Qissah indeed set the stage for the apostasy campaigns.

Campaigns against the Apostates:

No sooner had Usamah Ibn Zayd, may Allah be pleased with him, achieved victory in his expedition to the Levant and returned to Madeenah than Abu Bakr As-Sideeq, may Allah be pleased with him, made a plan to put an end to apostasy from Islam in all corners of the Arab Peninsula, after defeating the *Zakaah* withholders who tried to attack Madeenah.

To achieve this Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, made use of two ways: the peaceful way and the warring one. With regard to the peaceful way, he called upon the apostates to re-embrace Islam after they had bolted away from its fold and to give up their hostile activities. He sent envoys to all apostates and to draw their attention to the message the Prophet , peace and blessings be upon him, conveyed to the people, and to call upon them to return to Islam. The message read: "I am sending you a Muslim force consisting of the *Muhajreen* and the *Ansaar* and *Tabi`een*. I have ordered them not to launch any attack against you till they first call you to return to Allah; he who repents, responds to the call, give up hostile activities against Islam, and do good deeds will be forgiven and granted amnesty. And he who refuses to return to Islam, and persists in hostility will be given no quarter; force will be used against him, he will be put to sword, slaughtered, or burnt to death. Their women and children will be taken captive. Nothing short of allegiance to Islam will be accepted. He who seeks refuge in Islam, such faith will stand him in good stead. But he who persists in his apostasy will never be able to humble Allah. I have ordered my envoys to read this message of mine in public gatherings. Calling the *Adhan* (prayer call) will be regarded as an indication of the acceptance of Islam. If there is no *Adhan* this will be taken to mean that the tribe persists in its apostasy."

As for the warring way, Abu Bakr formed the Muslim forces into eleven corps each under its own commander. Each commander was given a flag and assigned an objective. The commanders were further authorized to recruit other soldiers on the way in their march to fulfil their objectives. The first corps were placed under the command of Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed, may Allah be pleased with him. They required to take action against Tulayhah of the Banu Asad tribe. Thereafter, they were to proceed against the Bani Tameems. The second corps under `Ikrama Ibn Abi Jahl, may Allah be pleased with him, were required to take action against the false Prophet Musaylmah of the Banu Haneefah tribe, but it was required not to engage the enemy till they received further reinforcement. The third corps under `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas were required to take action against the tribes of Quzaa`ah, Wadee`ah and Harith in the areas of Gaza, and Doomat Al-Jandal near the borders of Syria. The fourth corps under Sharahbeel Ibn Hasanah, may Allah be pleased with him, was required to follow `Ikramah and await further instructions. The fifth corps under Khalid Ibn Sa`eed was required to operate on the Syrian border in the Hamqatan region. The sixth corps under Turayfah Ibn Haajiz were required to take action against the apostate tribes of Hawazin and Banu Sulaym in the region east of Makkah and Madeenah. The seventh corps under Al-`Alaa' Ibn Hadramyy were commissioned to operate against the tribes in Bahrain. The eighth corps under `Agrafah Ibn Harsama were required to take action against the tribes in the coastal area of lower Yemen. The ninth corps under Hudhayfah Ibn Muhsan were required to take action against the apostates in Oman. The tenth corps under Muhajir Ibn Abi Umayyah were required to operate in Upper Yemen and Hadramaut. The eleventh corps under Suwayd Ibn Maqran were required to operate in the coastal areas north of Yemen.

As the various corps left to fulfil their objectives, Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, instructed the commanders to fear and be conscious of Almighty Allah. They were to exert themselves to the utmost in Allah's Cause, and to allow no sloth to retard their efforts. They were commanded that if any tribe responded with the *Adhan* it was not to be molested or attacked. Those who did not make such response were to be dealt with by fire and sword. All apostates guilty of murdering Muslims were to be killed. Those who were guilty of burning Muslims alive were to be likewise burnt alive. Abu Bakr insisted that the only options for the apostate tribes were unconditional surrender or war until total destruction. The commanders were enjoined not to dishonor the vow they pledged. They were also forbidden to depart from the targets assigned to them, with out further instructions.

Campaign against Tulayhah:

Tulayhah belonged to the tribe of Banu Asad in northern Arabia. He had laid claim to Prophet hood and divine revelation during the lifetime of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. He used to ridicule the Muslim way of Performing *Salaah*, and ask the followers of Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to pray standing. He used to say, "Allah does not want you to invert your faces or bend your backs in ugly postures, pray to Allah while standing, in a noble manner."

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, directed punitive action against the false Prophet. He sent to him Daraar Ibn Al-Azwad to crush him and all Muslims in the tribe of Asad. In his anxiety to have the benediction of killing a false Prophet, Daraar sneaked into the camp of Tulayhah with a view to murdering him, but the attempt was foiled, and that made the followers of Tulayhah proclaim that no sword could harm their so-called Prophet.

Before the Muslim army commissioned by the Prophet could advance against Tulayhah, the Prophet passed away. Tulayhah then declared that the death of the Prophet was a sign corroborative of his claim to Prophet hood. Many other tribes acknowledged Tulayhah as the Prophet, and the argument that weighed with them was that while Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was dead, Tulayhah was alive, and a living Prophet was to be preferred to a dead one. Tulayhah used to say to his people, "A Prophet from Banu Asad is dearer to me than a Prophet from Banu Hashim."

The Banu Fazarah tribe joined their leader `Uyaynah Ibn Hisn and supported Tulayhah. The tribes of `Abs, Ghatafaan, Banu Bakr also made common cause with Tulayhah. Parts of the Bani Tayy' and Banu Jadeelah also joined the ranks of Tulayhah. That made Tulayhah sufficiently strong and powerful, and he came to lead a confederacy of numerous tribes who held Northeast Arabia.

Just then when Tulayhah began to influence the people and a great number had followed him and apostated from Islam, Abu Bakr As-Sideeq, may Allah be pleased with him, commissioned Khalid Ibn Waleed, may Allah be pleased with him, to undertake punitive operations against Tulayhah. He mustered an army of 4,000 Muslims from the *Ansaar* and *Muhajireen* and those who followed in their footsteps.

`Adiyy Ibn Hatim At-Taa'i may Allah be pleased with him, who was fighting in the army of Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed, may Allah be pleased with him, used his influence on the people of the tribes of Tayy' and Jadeelah and convinced them not to follow Tulayhah. He managed to wean them from the support of Tulayhah and brought them back to the fold of Islam; they were even influenced by his invitation to the extent that they joined the ranks of the Muslim army under the command of Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed, may Allah be pleased with him. Through the efforts of `Addiyy, the allied tribe Banu Jadeelah also detached itself from Tulayhah and joined the fold of Islam. The addition of the contingents of Bani Tayy' and Banu Jadeelah considerably strengthened the Muslims.

It was not long before the two armies met at Buzakhah. When the Muslim army reached Buzakha, they were confronted by the forces of the apostate tribes. In spite of some defections, the forces of the confederate tribes were considerable in strength, and outnumbered the Muslim force. Khalid Ibn Al-

Waleed, may Allah be pleased with him, called upon Tulayhah to surrender to Islam, but the latter refused and rejected the invitation. Thereupon the two armies clashed. The Muslim forces were commanded by Khalid, while the forces of Tulayhah were commanded by `Uyaynah Ibn Hisn, the chief of Bani Fazarah. The two armies were well matched, and the outcome of the battle seemed uncertain.

Tulayhah did not take part in the battle, but kept himself hidden inside a tent, and pretended to await inspiration from Heaven. While Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed was increasing his pressure, `Uyaynah hard pressed, waited on Tulayhah to inquire whether he had received any heavenly message about the outcome of the battle. Tulayhah replied that the request made by him was under consideration in the heaven, and a reply was expected any moment. `Uyaynah led a charge against the Muslim forces, but was beaten back with heavy losses. He again waited on Tulayhah, and wanted to know whether any reply had come to him from the heavens. Tulayhah said that Allah had spoken to him in the following terms: "Your hopes and that of Khalid shall remain at variance, and between you matters are so ordained that an event will take place which you will never forget." At this ambiguous message carrying no sense, `Uyaynah realized that Tulayhah was an imposter, and his cause was doomed to failure. He told Tulayhah, "Woe unto you! I am leaving." `Uyaynah asked the men of his tribe to break camp and retreat to save themselves.

With the withdrawal of `Uyaynah and his men the tide of the battle was turned in favor of the Muslims; Khalid intensified the attack, and the battlefield came to be strewn with the dead bodies of the men of Tulayhah. Finding resistance useless, Tulayhah escaped with his wife to As-Shaam. With the withdrawal of Tulayhah the battle was over. The Muslims had achieved a significant victory, and most of the tribes surrendered and accepted Islam. Those who still remained opposed to Islam retreated and sought refuge further inland.

After the battle had finished, Khalid declared general amnesty for those who re-entered the fold of Islam and expressed regret for their past behavior. Those who had perpetrated atrocities on the Muslims were likewise apprehended and subjected to severe punishment. Abu Bakr approved of the action Khalid had taken, and sent him a message, saying: "May Allah bestow on you more blessings. Fear Allah as regards your duties, for Allah lo! Allah is with those who keep their duty unto Him and those who are good-doers."

The vacillating tribes in the region who had been sitting on the fence, and had preferred to watch the course of events submitted to the authority of Madeenah, paid *Zakaah* and were re-admitted to Islam. The chiefs of the tribes who surrendered were sent to Madeenah for presentation before Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him.

Tulayhah being left alone, jumped onto his horse, and on escape from Buzakhah, he sought refuge in Ash-Shaam. When Ash-Shaam was occupied by the Muslims, Tulayhah re-embraced Islam, and again his career as a false Prophet came to an end. Later he joined the Muslim army and took conspicuous part in the battles of Qadsiyyah and Nehavand, during the caliphate of `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him.

Sajaah, the False Prophetess:

Among the false Prophets who rose in Arabia as a result of the apostasy movement was an Arab Christian lady named Sajaah Bint Al-Harith Ibn Suayd, of Taghlib, who claimed herself to be a Prophetess. She belonged to the tribe of Bani Tameem.

Sajaah was a beautiful lady of an attractive personality. She dabbled in clairvoyance, and professed to predict future. She was a poetess, and mostly talked in verse. She had qualities of leadership, and was popular with her people. When she came to know that after the death of the Prophet , peace and blessings be upon him, Tulayhah and Musaylmah had declared themselves as Prophet s, she also followed suite and claimed Prophet hood. Soon she succeeded in mustering a good following from among the Banu Taghlib, the clan of her mother.

In her attempt to gather some followers from her father's clan as well, Sajaah contacted Malik Ibn Nuayrah, the chief of the Banu Yarboo` section of the Bani Tameem, the clan of her father. At the invitation of Malik Ibn Nuayrah, Sajaah came to Bitaah, the headquarters of the clan and entered into a pact with him.

Malik felt that with the help of Sajaah and her people he could overpower such of the sections of the tribe who were opposed to him. He acknowledged Sajaah as a Prophet ess, and incited her to crush the Banu Yarboo` . Sajaah undertook to help him in asserting his authority over the section of the Banu Yarboo` , who were opposed to him. The combined forces of Malik and Sajaah received some initial success. Then Sajaah decided to proceed to Yamamahh, the stronghold of the false Prophet Musaylmah Ibn Habeeb Al-Kadhaab.

Musaylamah a cunning man did not go on war against Sajaah. Instead he invited her to visit Yamamah as his honored guest. Sajaah accepted the invitation, and proceeded to Yamamah in Central Arabia. Musaylamah held a royal reception in her honor. Musaylamah was a handsome man of attractive personality, and Sajaah was extremely beautiful and passionate. Both were mutually attracted. Musaylamah pattered the vanity of Sajaah, and argued that as the Muslims were their common enemy, it would be to their mutual interest to join forces, and overpower the Muslims by united action. The idea appealed to Sajaah, and she said voiced her willingness to make common cause with him.

Then Musaylamah took another step forward and suggested that in order to strengthen their alliance it was but meet that they should be physically united as well and become husband and wife. Sajaah fell in line with his way of thinking, and agreed to become his wife. Musaylamah said that in view of their mutual concurrence, it was necessary that such alliance should take place at once without losing any time. Under the spell of the magnetic personality of Musaylamah, Sajaah agreed that the marriage should take place at once. Musaylamah took Sajaah to his camp where she remained with him for three days and three nights as his wife. As a wedding gift, Musaylamah declared that for their common followers the prayers in the morning and in the evening were no longer obligatory and that henceforward the number of prayers per day was to be reduced from five to three. He also agreed to pay Sajaah a share out of the revenues of Yamamah.

Instead of remaining with Musaylamah at Yamamah as his wedded wife, Sajaah decided to return to her people in Iraq. The followers of Sajaah felt frustrated at this turn of events, and they did not like their Prophet ess becoming mistress of Musaylamah. Presumably Sajaah also realized that in marrying Musaylamah she had lost the battle. From some accounts it appears that Sajaah was already married, and she surrendered to Musaylamah under some hypnotic influence. When this spell was over, and she realized the depth to which she had degraded herself she found safety in returning to Iraq. When she returned to her people in Iraq that was the end of the adventure of Prophet hood. She lived in obscurity for the rest of her life. When the Muslims conquered Iraq she became a Muslim along with the other members of her tribe. During the caliphate of Muawiyiah she resided at Kufa, where she died at a sufficiently advanced age.

Having reduced the Bani Asad and Bani Fazara, Khalid bin Walid decided to march against the Bani Tameem who lived on a plateau to the east. The Bani Tameem had accepted Islam during the lifetime of the Prophet . After the death of the Prophet when the waves of apostasy spread over Arabia, the Bani Tameem were also affected. The tribe came to be divided into two sections. One section remained faithful to Islam, while the other section repudiated their allegiance to Islam. There was however some confusion as to who among the tribe favored Islam and who were against it.

When Khalid gave order to march to Bitaah, the *Ansaar* in the army refused to join him. Their stand was that the Caliph had not sanctioned any operation against the Bani Tameem. Khalid said that being the Commander of the forces operating in the region, he was in the best position to know which operations should or should not be undertaken in the interests of the mission for achieving the supremacy of Islam. He said: "This matter is inevitable, and a chance that has to be seized. I did not receive any message from (the caliph), and I am the Commander and to me come the news, yet I will not force you to march, but I am heading for Al-Bitaah."

Then the army of Khalid marched forward, while the *Ansaar* stayed behind. After some time on second thought, the *Ansaar* also decided to accompany Khalid. They accordingly rejoined the main Muslim army at the next stage of their march.

The orders of Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, were that if any tribe professed faith in Islam, no action should be taken against it. If a tribe did not profess faith in Islam, it was to be invited to repent and be reverted to Islam. Operations were to be undertaken against a tribe only in the event of its refusal. It was laid down that if on reaching the settlement of a tribe, the Muslim army heard the tribe give *Adhaan*, it was to be understood that the people of the tribe acknowledged Islam. In the absence of such response it was to be presumed that the people had apostatized.

Before the Muslim army reached Bitaah, a delegation of Bani Tameem waited on Khalid. They brought with them the amount of the *Zakaah* payable to the Muslims. Khalid took the amount, but continued his advance to Bitaah. When the Muslim army reached Bitaah, there were no forces of the Bani Tameem to oppose the Muslims. The position was confused. Malik Ibn Nuayrah, the chief of the Bani Tameem, neither came forward to give his loyalty, nor did he come forward to oppose the Muslims. On the other hand he went into hiding. That made him the subject of suspicion. Khalid directed his soldiers to forage in the neighborhood. As a result of such operations, Malik and his wife Layla were taken captive and brought before Khalid. Malik's wife, Layla was known far and near for her breathtaking beauty.

Abu Qatadah, Al-Harith Ibn Rib`yy Al-Ansaaryy, testified that the prisoners offered Salaah, while others said they neither gave Adhaan nor offered prayer. The prisoners retired for the night. At the dead of night, Khalid ordered that the night being cold, the prisoners should be kept warm, but this order was misunderstood to be an order for murder. Accordingly, Malik and his male companions were killed. It was Daraar Ibn

Al-Azwad who murdered Malik Ibn Nuwayrah. Having seen the Malik and his companions killed, Khalid remarked, "If Allah wills that something should occur, it surely occurs."

After the death of Malik, the entire tribe of Bani Tameem surrendered and professed faith in Islam. Khalid immediately married Layla, the beautiful widow of Malik Ibn Nuwayrah.

The campaign against the Bani Tameem was a masterstroke from the political point of view. It brought the entire tribe to the fold of Islam. From the military point of view the significance of the action at Bitaah was that the rear of Sajaah, the false Prophetess, was cut off, and she could no longer count on the support of Bani Tameem.

The episode, however, led to considerable scandal. In some quarters it was held that Malik was indeed a Muslim, and that he had been murdered merely because Khalid coveted his pretty wife. Some of the *Ansaar* in the army of Khalid led by Abu Qatadah refused to fight under the command of Khalid. Abu Qatadah along with Malik's brother set out for Madeenah to lodge a complaint against Khalid before the Caliph. MuTameem was a distinguished poet, and he composed an elegy mourning the death of his brother, and condemning Khalid as his murderer. These verses became popular in Madeenah and those who listened to them grieved at the murder of Malik.

Khalid was summoned to Madeenah and was asked to clarify his position. There were two charges against him: murdering a Muslim man and marrying his wife. Khalid's defense of himself was that if according to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, he was the "Sword of Allah", such sword could not fall on the neck of a Muslim.

On entering the Grand Mosque in his rusty armor with arrows stuck in his turban, Khalid was noticed by `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, who went up to him, pulled out the arrows and broke them into pieces. He said threateningly: "You have killed a Muslim in cold blood and taken his wife for yours! By Allah! You deserve to be stoned!" Nevertheless, when Khalid met the Caliph, he managed to defend himself and was excused, though he did not escape being criticized for his disgraceful marriage with Layla.

`Umar was of the view that Khalid was to be blamed, and he should be suitably punished. Abu Bakr felt that a military commander, Khalid was indispensable. His view was that even if it was held that Khalid was guilty of a lapse, such lapse could be passed over in the broader interest of Islam. Musaylamah in the Yamamah valley was posing a great threat to the Muslims. Two Muslim Generals sent against Musaylamah had suffered defeat. The position was critical, and at that stage a General of the caliber of Khalid alone could vindicate the honor of Islam. Abu Bakr decided to overlook the lapse of Khalid, and directed him to undertake operations against Musaylamah. As there were doubts whether Malik was or was not a Muslim, Abu Bakr decided that blood money should be paid out of the Baytul-Maal to the heirs of Malik for his murder.

`Umar did not feel happy at this decision of Abu Bakr. When `Umar remonstrated, Abu Bakr observed: "Umar, I cannot sheathe the sword, which Allah has intended to be wielded against the non-Muslims."

Campaign Against Musaylamah Al-Khadhaab (The Liar):

Of all the imposters and false Prophet s who rose in Arabia after the death of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, the most notorious and dangerous was Musaylamah Al-Khadhaab (the liar), who belonged to the Banu Haneefah tribe of Central Arabia.

Musaylamah visited Madeenah during the lifetime of the Prophet, and enjoyed the privilege of his company for some time. On return from Madeenah, Musaylamah, however, claimed himself to be a Prophet of Allah. He laid claim to a divine mission and formed a new creed, where he absolved his followers from the obligations of *Siyaam* and *Zakaah*, reduced the number of daily prayers, and made adultery and drinking lawful to the people. He also forbade his followers to cohabit with their wives once they had become mothers. In imitation of the Glorious Qur'an he recited rhythmical sentences and bits of doggerel, which he had himself composed, but gave out as having been revealed by Almighty Allah.

Musaylamah had an attractive personality and was endowed with a superb physique. He was a good speaker, and could sway the masses. He exploited these qualities, and succeeded in winning over a considerable following.

With his illness becoming serious, the Prophet , peace and blessings be upon him, asked Musaylamah to abandon his pretensions. However, Musaylamah sent an impudent letter to the Prophet, saying: "From Musylamah, the Prophet of Allah, to Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah. Surely Allah has made me your partner in Prophet hood. Let us divide the earth between ourselves." To this the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, replied: "In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. From Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah, to

Musaylamah the Liar! Peace be upon those who follow the truth. Surely the earth belongs to Allah, and gives it as a heritage to such of His servants as He wishes; and the sequel is for the righteous.

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, deputed Nahr Ar-Rajjaal Ibn `Unfuwah, a Muslim convert from the tribe of Banu H̲aneefah, to go back to his people in order to propagate Islam and refute the claims of Musaylamah. On return to his tribe, Nahr Ar-Rajjaal fell a victim to the blandishments of Musaylamah, and falsely declared that he was witness to the fact that the Prophet had acknowledged Musaylamah as co-sharer in the divine mission. That established the credentials of Musaylamah, and the number of his followers increased considerably.

With the death of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, Musaylamah gained in strength further. The general argument that prevailed with the people was that Muh̲ammad, peace be upon him, was dead while Musaylamah was alive, and that a living Prophet was to be preferred to a dead one. Many tribes who were hostile to Islam joined his ranks.

Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, originally entrusted the operations to crush Musaylamah to `Ikrimah Ibn Abi Jahl. Sharhabeel Ibn Hasanah was to advance with another column to the assistance of `Ikrimah. Though strict orders were given to `Ikrimah by Abu Bakr not to engage in a battle with the impostor till reinforcements arrived, he was so anxious to get the better of him that he immediately started fighting Musaylamah, and the Muslims were beaten back with considerable losses. When the news of the defeat reached Madeenah, Abu Bakr felt very much sad and distressed. Some time later, Sharhabeel arrived in the Yamaamah valley with his column. He also launched an attack against Musaylamah without waiting for help, and was also defeated.

Two successive defeats created an embarrassing situation for the Muslims. That raised the morale of the followers of Musaylamah who proudly declared that Musaylamah was indeed a Prophet and divine help was on their side.

It was at this critical juncture that Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, commissioned Khalid Ibn Al-Al-Waleed, may Allah be pleased with him, to set off on a campaign against Musaylamah. Elaborate arrangements were made to reinforce the army of Khalid. Seasoned soldiers were included in the force under his command. Al-Baraa' Ibn Malik and Thabit Ibn Qays led the contingents of the *Ansaar*, while Abu Hadhayfah and Zayd led the contingent of the Muhajreen. Against his declared policy, Abu Bakr permitted the veterans of Badr to join the forces of Khalid. Among others, those who joined the force were `Abdur Rahmaan Ibn Abi Bakr, `Abdullaah Ibn `Umar, and Abu Dujaanah the renowned warrior of Uhud, may Allah be pleased with them all.

The Battle of `Aqraba:

From Madeenah the Muslim army proceeded to Bitaah. Here contingents from the Muslim tribes joined the force. From there the Muslim army marched south to the valley of Yamaamah under the command of Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed. In the way the Muslim army came across some men of Banu Haneefah led by Majaa`ah Ibn Maraarah. Under the orders of Khalid, all of them were put to death except Majaa`ah, whom Khalid kept in custody to serve as a hostage, because he was well aware of the tricks and tactics of war. He was put in chains, and entrusted to the custody of Layla, the new wife of Khalid, who accompanied him to the battlefield. Khalid ordered him to care of her.

Musaylamah intercepted the advance of the Muslim army at the plain of `Aqraba. Here the two opposing armies arranged their ranks for the encounter. The battle that followed was hotly contested. The forces of Musaylamah numbered over 4,000, while the strength of the Muslim army did not exceed 13,000. Besides being outnumbered the Muslim forces suffered from certain disabilities. There were differences between the tribes, the *Ansaar* and the Muhajreen.

When the battle of `Aqraba flared up there was Musaylamah's eloquent son, Sharhabeel, to egg the troops on and boost their morale. He reminded them of Khalid 's cruelty and warned them that unless they fought bravely their women would be taken captives.

A dust storm blew across the valley against the faces of the Muslims. Taking advantage of this, the forces of Musaylamah increased their pressure, and the Muslims had to fall back. Some men of the Banu Haneefah even reached the tent of Khalid where Majaa`ah was in chains guarded by Layla. These men wanted to kill Layla, and rescue Majaa`ah. Mujaa`ah called upon them to desist from raising their hands against a woman. He wanted them to go and kill some men. These men left the camp, and said that they would return after some time to rescue Majaa`ah. In the confusion that followed, the party could not come back, and in the meantime the Muslims were able to take precautionary measures.

When the battle for the first day ended, there was jubilation in the camp of Musaylamah. Though Khalid had been forced to withdraw he refused to admit defeat. He regrouped his army in tribal commands and exhorted the various tribes to show their valor on the battlefield. From within the Makkah and Madinite horsemen he created a reserve force of a thousand cavalrymen and kept them under his personal command.

When the battle began on the next day, the forces of Musaylamah elated by the pride of victory on the first day made the bid to push forward. Al-Baraa' was the commander of one of the Muslim wings. There was a strange peculiarity of Al-Baraa'. Whenever he would go to fight, his whole body would shake necessitating others to hold him. After some time his body would stop shaking, and he would feel electrified. He would then rush forward against the enemy and fight like a lion. At the battle of `Aqraba he had his fit of shivering, and thereafter he plunged into the thick of the battle crying, "O Muslims, where do you go? Here am I, Al-Baraa' Ibn Malik: come to me." Al-Baraa' and his men made a determined charge.

`Abdur Rahmaan Ibn Abi Bakr shot an arrow from his bow that killed Muhhkam Ibn At-Tufayl who commanded the forces of Musaylamah.

At this stage the two armies encountered each other in a headlong combat. As the forces of Musaylamah were larger in number, such state of affairs was advantageous to them. While the front ranks of the two armies grappled with each other in hand to hand fight, Khalid collected his cavalry reserves, and carrying out a wide outflanking movement, dashed for the mounds where the camp of Musaylamah was located. The boldness of the move of Khalid took Banu Haneefah completely unawares. The bodyguard of Musaylamah fought valiantly, but they could not hold ground for long. As Khalid increased his pressure, Musaylamah lost his nerves, and retreated to a neighboring fortified garden.

The Battle of the Garden:

With the withdrawal of Musaylamah, his army lost the will to fight, and they too found safety in seeking refuge in the garden. A huge wall surrounded the garden, and the fugitives closed the gate thus shutting access to the pursuing Muslims. Al-Baraa' Ibn Malik asked his companions to lift him to the top of the garden wall, and from there he jumped into the garden. Some other Muslims did likewise. Thus, hazarding their lives, this group of Muslims rushed to the gate and opened it. With the opening of the gate, the Muslim army rushed into the garden, and let loose a reign of slaughter on the Banu Haneefah. The Banu Haneefah fought desperately for sheer survival, but theirs was a crushing defeat. All advantages now lay with the Muslims. The men of Banu Haneefah were cut to pieces in large numbers, and the garden was virtually drenched with blood. So bloody was the battle of the garden that in the Arab annals it came to be known as the "Battle of the Garden of Death."

In the "Garden of Death" Wahshi, the Negro slave who had fought on the side of the Quraysh against the Muslims at the battle of Uhud, and had killed Hamzah, the uncle of the Prophet , peace and blessings be upon him, threw in a javelin at Musaylamah, while at the same time Abu Dujaanah rushed forward and fell on Musaylamah with his sword, until he fell dead, and his severed head was hoisted for all to see. Thereupon the Banu Haneefah formally surrendered.

With such surrender the valley of Yamaamah which had so long defied Islam lay prostrate at the feet of the Muslims.

The Treaty of Yamaamah:

The battle of Yamaamah was the bloodiest battle so far fought by the Muslims. It was a decisive battle that established the supremacy of Islam in Central Arabia. It proved to be a great trial of strength, and though the Muslims won the victory, this was achieved at a heavy cost. The casualties of Banu Haneefah were staggering. As many as 7,000 followers of Musaylamah died in the battle of `Aqraba, and equal number fell in the Garden of Death. Twelve hundred Muslims met their martyrdom in this action, and although the number was very much less than the number of the dead of Banu Haneefah, the loss was nevertheless colossal. Almost every family in Makkah and Madeenah suffered the loss of some dear one. Most of the Muslims who had memorized the Qur'an died in this battle, and their loss was most acute. Among the martyrs were Abu Hudhayfah, Zayd Ibn Al-Khattaab, Abu Dujaanah, Yazeed Ibn Aws,Yazeed Ibn Thabit, and many other distinguished persons from among the *Ansaars* and the *Muhajreen*.

All the important leaders of the Banu Haneefah were killed, and there was no leader to negotiate terms of surrender. Majaa`ah who had won the confidence of Khalid by saving his wife, Layla, undertook to make negotiations with the Banu Haneefah. Maja`ah was released on parole, and he went to negotiate terms with the Banu Haneefah. He returned to say that the major portion of the army was still in the fort of Yamaamah, and that they were poised for another action Khalid decided that he would himself go to the city to assess the situation. Majaa`ah sent a secret message to the Banu Haneefah that all women, old men, and children should mount the battlements and display their arms. When Khalid went to the city he saw that the battlements were crowded. That set Khalid thinking. After the disastrous war of `Aqrabah, the Muslim forces though victorious, were too exhausted to risk another action. Khalid was under the circumstances keen to avoid another war. Mujaa`ah played upon the feelings of Khalid and said that if lenient terms were offered he might be able to arrive at some settlement with the Banu Haneefah. Khalid allowed him to go to his people again. Majaa`ah returned to say that if the Muslims were to be content with taking only one fourth of the property of the Banu Haneefah, peace could be negotiated. Khalid agreed and the peace treaty was signed "hereunder the Banu Haneefah were to surrender one fourth of their property.

After the treaty, Majaa`ah was allowed freedom and he returned to his people. The gates of the city were thereafter thrown open. When Khalid rode into the city, the Banu Haneefah army was no where to be seen. "Where are your warriors?" asked Khalid. Pointing to the women and children, Majaa`ah said, "These women and children were the warriors. I had them dressed as warriors, and made them parade on the battlements". Khalid turned furiously to Majaa`ah and said, "This means that you deceived me". Majaa`ah merely shrugged his shoulders and said, "You may kill me, if you like, but I had to resort to this ruse to save my people." Khalid felt very bitter, but as he had given his promise to the people of Banu Haneefah, he was not in favor of withdrawing from the terms of the treaty. Khalid had heard of the beauty of the daughter of Majaa`ah, and he asked Majaa`ah to give him his daughter in marriage in case he wanted to escape his wrath. Majaa`ah said, "I am at your disposal, but you know what happened when you married Layla. The Caliph did not approve of that marriage, and he will not approve of your marriage with my daughter." Khalid retorted, "You need not bother about the approval of the Caliph. I wed your daughter tonight. You may go and make your arrangements accordingly." That night Khalid married the beautiful daughter of Majaa`ah.

As the Muslims had suffered heavily at the hands of Banu Haneefah, Abu Bakr sent instructions to Khalid that no mercy should be shown to the Banu Haneefah and all the male adults should be killed. Before these instructions reached Khalid, he had given these people general amnesty, and they had accepted Islam. Under these circumstances the instructions of Abu Bakr could not be complied with.

Khalid sent a delegation of the people of Banu Haneefah along with the booty to Madeenah. The delegates expressed regrets, and said that Musaylamah had deceived them. They assured Abu Bakr that they were sincere in their profession of Islam. Abu Bakr treated them with due courtesy and let things rest at that. He was, however, very bitter at Khalid's marriage with Mujaa`ah's daughter. He addressed the following letter to Khalid: "O son of the mother of Khalid, What has gone wrong with you? You are out to wed women when the land around your camp is still drenched with blood of over a thousand martyrs of Muslims!!"

Apart from this mild censure, Abu Bakr chose to take no further action against the Victor of `Aqraba.

The Apostates of Bahrain:

After the fall of Musaylamah Al-Khadhaab and the overthrow of the Banu Haneefah, Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, decided that a campaign should be undertaken against the people of Bahrain who had supported Musaylamah in the fight against the Muslims. Bahrain comprised the coastal strip to the west of the Persian Gulf. During the lifetime of the Prophet , peace and blessings be upon him, Al-Mundhir Ibn Saawa Al-`Abdyy was the ruler of Bahrain. The Prophet , peace and blessings be upon him, sent a mission headed by Al-`Alaa' Ibn Al-Hadrami to Bahrain, and invited Al-Mundhir to embrace Islam. Al-Mundhir welcomed the call and accepted Islam. Al-Mundhir continued to be the ruler of Bahrain under the suzerainty of Madeenah. Under the influence of Al-Mundhir most of the people of Bahrain accepted Islam. During his reign, people abided by the dictates of Islam, and justice was tasted everywhere.

Soon after the death of the Prophet , peace and blessings be upon him, Al-Mundhir died. His death led to anarchy and utter confusion; all the tribes of Bahrain, with the exception of `Abdul Qays tribe of, apostatized and bolted out of the fold of Islam. The apostates made Al-Gharoor[6] their ruler. He was a descendant of the Arab kings of Al-Heerah, and was a bitter enemy of Islam. He was crowned as the king of Bahrain, and he took the pledge to fight against Islam.

Al-Gharoor brought pressure on Jarood and his people to denounce Islam. The rebels claimed that if Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had been a Prophet, he would not have died. However, Jarood and his people stood firm on the path of Islam. Thereupon the Bahrain forces led an attack against the Muslims. They laid siege to Jwaatha, and prevented any food or resources to reach the Muslims of `Abdul Qays.

At this awkward position, Jarood, steadfast in his faith, assembled the people of his tribe and addressed them thus: "O people of `Abdul Qays, let me ask you something and reply to my question if you know, and keep silent if you do not." They said, "You may ask us." Thereupon Jarood said: "Are you aware that there were Prophet s before Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him?' They answered in the affirmative. 'Where have they gone?' Jarood continued. They said that they had died. Thereupon Jarood said: "So Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, died just as other Prophet s before him had died. If the deaths of the other Prophet s could not affect their Prophet hood, how can the death of Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, affect his Prophet hood? I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad, whether dead or alive, is His Messenger." The argument of Jarood carried weight with his tribe, and they continued their allegiance and tenaciousness to Islam.

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[6] His name was Al-Mundhir Ibn An-Nu`maan Ibn Al-Mundhir.

At that time, Al-Hadrami returned to Madeenah to seek help. Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, sent him at the head of a force for the relief of the besieged Muslims. In the meantime the battle of Yamaamah was over, and the Banu Haneefah had been won over to Islam. Many men of Banu Haneefah joined the ranks of Al-Hadrami, as his forces passed through the Yamaamah valley on their way to Bahrain.

In the meantime the non-Muslims of Bahrain received considerable help from the Persians, and they were fully prepared for a confrontation with the Muslims.

Al-Hadrami called upon the Bahrain authorities to offer submission, but they ridiculed the offer and declared that the sword would decide the issue. The Bahrain forces were sufficiently strong, and that made Al-Hadrami halt. He sent words to the besieged Muslims at Jwaatha to persevere for he was coming to their relief. He had a ditch dug round his camp, and the Muslims waited for a suitable opportunity to overpower the enemy. This state of stalemate lasted for a month, and that made the Bahrain forces feel that the Muslims were no match for them.

One night the Muslims heard a lot of noise from the non-Muslim camp. It was reported to Al-Hadrami that the non-Muslims were celebrating their national festival, were dead drunk and were giving themselves to fun and frolic. Al-Hadrami, deciding to avail of the opportunity, ordered his troops to take up arms, cross the ditch and pounce upon the enemy. The surprise attack unnerved the Bahrain forces. They ran helter-skelter in all directions and were cut to pieces by the pursuing Muslim forces.

Al-Hatam, the Commander of the Bahrain forces, was killed, while Prince Gharoor was captured alive. Over 10,000 apostates died in the operation. The Bahrain forces laid down arms and surrendered. Jarood and his Muslim forces came and joined the victorious Muslim army. The people of Bahrain were admitted to the fold of Islam. Those who refused to accept Islam escaped to the island of Dareen in the Persian Gulf.

Al-Hadrami reorganized the administration and appointed his agents in various parts of Bahrain. After settling the affairs in Bahrain proper, Al-Hadrami decided to take action against the persons who had taken refuge in the island of Dareen. Al-`Alaa' crossed the shallow Gulf water by using donkeys, horses and camels. The apostates were literally annihilated, and the booty collected was tremendous.

The victory of the Muslims in Bahrain was significant in more than one way. Bahrain was at considerable distance from Madeenah, and the victory at Bahrain showed that the Muslim military army was sufficiently long and powerful, and could reach far. The assistance that the Persians gave to the people of Bahrain was originally a cause of great concern to the Muslims, but in the long run this worked to the advantage of the Muslims. The Muslims had originally intended to confine their operations to Arabia proper, but the alliance of the people of Bahrain with the Persians provided the Muslims an opportunity for settling accounts with the Persians. The Banu Haneefah who had been at one time the greatest opponents of Islam now became the ardent supporters of the faith. Muthanna, a chief of the Banu Haneefah, organized a flying column, and undertook to protect the barriers against the Persians. The battle of Bahrain thus proved a prelude to the war with Persia. But for the interference of the Persians in the affairs of Bahrain, the Muslims might not have advanced in Persia, and history would have taken a different course.

Campaigns in Oman and Mahrah:

During the lifetime of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, Oman bordering on the Persian Gulf was under Persian influence. It was ruled by Jayfar Ibn Al-Jalandi who owed allegiance to Persia. When the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, sent letters inviting the various rulers to Islam, a letter was addressed to Jayfar as well. As the Persian power was on the decline, Jayfar stood in need of some outside support to bolster up his rule. He responded favorably to the Prophet 's invitation, and said he was inclined to accept Islam, but the difficulty was that his people were not likely to agree to the payment of *Zakaah* to Madeenah. The Prophet assured him that if he and his people became Muslims, the amount realized from *Zakaah* could be distributed among the poor and the destitute in Oman itself. Thereupon Jayfar became a Muslim, and under his influence most of his people embraced Islam.

After the death of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, a false Prophet Laqee*t* Ibn Malik Al-Azdyy came into prominence. He belonged to the Azdi tribe, which was very numerous. The Azdi felt elated at having a Prophet of their own. They apostatized from Islam. Jayfar, however, remained faithful to Islam, but he lost his hold on the people of Oman most of whom accepted the new creed. Laqeet gained power, overthrew Jayfar, and captured political power. Jayfar and the few people who remained true to Islam had to seek refuge in the mountains. Laqeet declared himself as the king of Oman.

With the change in the affairs of Oman, Jayfar sent a letter to Abu Bakr As-Sideeq, may Allah be pleased with him, to inform him of the developments in Oman, and sought his help. Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, dispatched a force under the command of Hudhayfah Ibn Muhsan to undertake operations in Oman. The wave of apostasy overwhelmed the neighboring state of Mahrah as well. The Caliph sent another force under the command of `Arfajah Al-Bariqyy to subdue the apostates in Mahrah. Both the forces under Hudhayfah and `Arfajah were required to collaborate. The operations were required to be commenced from Oman. The instructions of Abu Bakr were that it there was a battle in Oman, Hudhayfah was to lead the combined forces, and if the operations were undertaken in Mahrah, `Arfajah was to hold the Command. When `Ikrimah Ibn Abi Jahl met a reverse at the battle of Yamaamah, he was required not to return to Madeenah, but to proceed with his men to Oman and Mahrah. All the three forces of Hudhayfah, `Arfajah and `Ikramah were directed to act in concert.

The Battle of Daba:

`Ikrimah and his force reached Oman first. The force of Hudhayfah soon joined him. Word was then sent to Jayfar and his followers to descend from the hills and join the Muslim forces. Thereafter, the combined forces marched to Daba, and it was at this place that the battle flared up. Laqeet had a large force at his command, and the Muslims were outnumbered. It was fierce battle, and to start with, the forces of Laqeet appeared to dominate the field and it seemed as if they were going to win the battle.

At the nick of time, when the Muslim ranks were likely to disintegrate under the pressure of the forces of Laqeet, the Muslims received unexpected reinforcement came from Bahrain and the tribe of `Abdul Qays. That turned the tide of the battle. The Muslims charged with great vehemence, and the forces of Laqeet were unable to stand the charge. They found safety in retreat. As the enemy fled, the Muslims pursued them, and overtaking them they cut them to pieces. As many as 10,000 rebels fell on the battlefield. Laqeet himself was killed, and with his death all resistance broke down, and the forces of Oman laid down the arms. As a result of the battle of Daba, Jayfar was restored as the ruler of Oman, and the apostates were re-admitted to the fold of Islam.

After order was restored in Oman, and the Muslim rule was re-established, `Ikrimah crossed over with his force to attend to the affairs of Mahrah. Like the people of other parts of Arabia, the people of Mahrah also apostatized after the death of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. The people of Mahrah came to be divided into two sections: one section was led Shikhreet, and the other was led by Al-Musabbih. Taking stock of the affairs in Mahrah, `Ikrimah felt that instead of fighting against the people as a whole, it would be expedient to take advantage of the rift between the two sections. `Ikrimah accordingly opened negotiations with the minority party led by Shikhreet. The negotiations succeeded, and Shikhreet and his men accepted Islam. `Ikrimah offered them full support to capture political power and overthrow their rival section. The majority section led by Al-Musabbih was asked by `Ikrimah to return to Islam, but they rejected the offer. The combined forces of Shikhreet and `Ikrimah accordingly marched to crush the forces of Al-Musabbih. In the battle that followed the fighting was severer than the fighting at the battle of Daba. It was a hotly contested battle, and the apostates fought with a spirit of vengeance. The chances of victory were balanced, but ultimately the faith and determination of the Muslims carried the day, and the forces of Al-Musabbih found safety in capitulation. Immense booty fell into the hands of the victor

Muslims, including two thousand dromedaries and a large supply of arms. The defeated people reverted to Islam, and they were granted amnesty. `Arfajah carried one fifth of the booty to Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, while `Ikrimah stayed in Mahrah to re-organize the administration.

Campaign in Yemen:

When the people of Yemen accepted Islam, the Prophet , peace and blessings be upon him, made Badhaan their ruler. Badhaan continued to be the ruler of Yemen until he died. After Badhaan's death, the Prophet appointed his son, Sharhra, the head of San`aa', and entrusted other towns of Yemen to some other leaders. Mu`aadh Ibn Jabal, may Allah be pleased with him, used to move from one town to another in order to teach them Islam.

At this stage a false Prophet rose in Yemen. He was called Al-Aswad Al-`Ansi, who belonged to the clan of `Ans. By dubious methods, Al-Aswad succeeded in winning a considerable number of followers. Within a short time, he became powerful enough to challenge Shahra, who remained faithful to Islam. In the confrontation that followed, Shahr was defeated and killed, and Al-Aswad captured power. He now crowned himself as the king of Yemen, and repudiated allegiance to Madeenah. He forcefully married the beautiful widow of Shahra, Azad by name. When the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of these news, he sent Wabar Ibn Yahnas with a letter to the people of San`aa' asking them to defend their religion by confronting Al-Aswad and availing of every chance to kill him.

Al-Aswad Al-`Ansi was a man of suspicious nature. He felt that in order to strengthen his position he must overthrow Feroz and Qays. Feroz and Qays soon fell out with Al-Aswad.

Azad, too, bitterly hated Al-`Ansi. In conspiracy spearheaded by Qays, Feroz and Azad, Al-Aswad was assassinated. In the morning, they gave *Adhaan* and celebrated their getting rid of the evil of Al-Aswad Al-`Ansi. Thereafter, they agreed to entrust their affairs to Mu`aadh Ibn Jabal, who used to lead them in *Salaah*. The news reached Madeenah in the morning of the same day when the Prophet , peace and blessings be upon him, passed away.

When the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, died, the people of Yemen, incited by some of their leaders, again bolted away from Islam. Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, sent a word to those who remained steadfast on the path of Islam asking them to stand against the apostates until help and reinforcement come to them. Abu Bakr dispatched a huge force under the command of Al-Muhaajir Ibn Abi Umayyah, who got San`aa' back, and took the leaders of apostasy movement, Qays Ibn `Abd Yaghooth and `Amr Ibn Ma`d Yakrib, as captives.

Thereafter, Al-Muhaajir marched to Kindah at Hadramawt, which had also apostatized from Islam. There the forces of Al-Muhaajir and those of `Ikrimah Ibn Abi Jahl joined together, and fought against Kindah till they defeated them, and took Al-Ash`ath Ibn Qays as captive. Then they sent to Abu Bakr As-Siddeeq, may Allah be pleased with him, Al-Madeenah to give him the glad tidings of the conquest.

The Conquests in the Lifetime of As-Sideeq

The Motives behind Muslim Conquests:

By and large, Islam was not revealed to the tribe of Quraysh or to Arabs exclusively. Islam was revealed to guide humanity in its entirety. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلا كَافَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لا يَعْلَمُونَ." (سبأ: ٢٨)

"We have not sent thee but as a universal (Messenger) to men, giving them glad tidings, and warning them (against sin), but most men understand not." (Saba': 28)

"وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ." (الأنبياء: ١٠٧)

and ***"We sent thee not, but as a Mercy for all creatures."*** (Al-Anbiyaa': 107)

Though the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, spent thirteen years in Makkah calling unto its people to embrace Islam, and ten years in Madeenah calling unto Arabs in general, along with non-Arabs, to worship their Sole Creator, and fighting whoever tried to stand in his way, he constantly focused on the universality of Islam even in Muslims' darkest hours. For instance, when Khabbaab Ibn Al-Aratt, may Allah be pleased with him, spoke to him complaining about the severe torture Quraysh inflicted on them, the Prophet , peace and blessings be upon him, answered: *"I swear by Allah that He will see this call through until the day comes when a traveler would journey from San`aa' to Hadramawt fearing none but Allah and the wolf lest it should devour his sheep, but you are impatient."*

Also, during the battle of the Trench, while Muslims were busy digging a trench round Madeenah, the Prophet pointed to his companions that the call to Islam is for the whole of mankind. He also foretold that the Muslim state will extend to include the lands of the Persians and the Romans. He, peace and blessings be upon him, said that the light that glimmered from the rock that he hit showed him palaces of Khosrau, the Romans and Basrah. He also said that Gabriel told him that his nation will have the upper hand over them.

Consequently, once the Prophet made peace with Quraysh, he began to send messengers outside the Arab Peninsula, calling Khosrau, Caesar, rulers of Basrah, Egypt and Abyssinia to worship Allah and embrace Islam. He warned them that if they turned down his call, they would thus be committing a huge sin as they would have prevented the call for the truth from reaching their nations.

Afterwards, he sent out a campaign to the outskirts of Syria where the battle of Mu'tah took place. Further, at the age of sixty, Prophet Muhammad went out to Tabook in order to practically show Muslims the way to call to Islam so long as rulers and kings stood in the way of messengers and would not let the words of truth find their way to the masses.

The Prophet was hence setting an example for all Muslims who were to shoulder the responsibility of spreading Islam all around the globe in order to comply with Allah's words when He says:

"وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِّتَكُونُواْ شُهَدَاء عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا."

(البقرة: ١٤٣)

"Thus have We made of you an Ummah justly balanced, that ye might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves." (Al-Baqarah: 143)
and

"وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ مِّلَّةَ أَبِيكُمْ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِن قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا
شُهَدَاء عَلَى النَّاسِ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِاللَّهِ هُوَ مَوْلَاكُمْ فَنِعْمَ الْمَوْلَى
وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ." (الحج:٧٨)

"And strive in His cause as ye ought to strive, (with sincerity and under discipline). He has chosen you, and has imposed no difficulties on you in religion; it is the cult of your father Abraham. It is He Who has named you Muslims, both before and in this (Revelation); that the Messenger may be a witness for you, and ye be witnesses for mankind! So establish regular Prayer, give regular Charity, and hold fast to Allah! He is your Protector- the best to protect and the best to help!" (Al-Hajj: 78)

Therefore, when Muslims managed to unite under the banner of Islam and annihilate apostasy in the Arabian Peninsula, their next goal was to spread Islam throughout the world. That was indeed one of the prime motives behind Muslim conquests.

Aims of Muslim conquests:

The basic aim of Muslim conquests was to spread the call to Islam to all nations in all lands, away from all forms of coercion, and to conquer tyrannical rulers who would adamantly stand in its way.

When reviewing Muslim conquests that took place between Muslims and other nations, whether at its outset, during its peak, or towards its end, we realize that they were all based on one and the same principle: calling on people to embrace Islam, or to enter into a peace agreement and lead a dignified life under the protection of Muslims. If they rejected both options, war would be the only choice left.

This is illustrated in the words of Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed to the ruler of Al-Hayrah when he said: "I call on you to worship Allah and embrace Islam. Should you accept our call, you become Muslims enjoying the same rights and shouldering the same responsibilities. Should you reject, you have to pay the *Jizyah*. Should you refuse to pay the *Jizyah*, you will have to face men who are keener on death than you are on life. We will fight you till Allah's word comes to pass between us." Similarly, Khalid always had his army leaders call on people to embrace Islam first before battling with them. This is best expressed in the message he sent to rulers of Persia which read: "In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful, from Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed to the ruler of Persia: embrace Islam in order to live in peace. If you do not, you will live under my protection in return for the *Jizyah*. Otherwise, you are up against people who love death just as much as you love wine."

Added to the above-mentioned aim is another, namely, securing the yet budding Muslim state against the evil plots concocted by its enemies who were secretly lurking waiting to make their move, mainly the Persians, the Romans and others.

It therefore becomes obvious that coercion was never the way to embrace Islam. True belief has to be based on total and complete conviction. Swords were unsheathed only to open the way for the call to the truth. Forces of evil embodied in the tyrannical kings and rulers had to be driven off the road in order for their peoples to see the bright light of day.

The Conquest of Iraq

The Battle of Chains:

When Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed, may Allah be pleased with him, finished the wars against the apostates, he received orders from Abu Bakr As-Sideeq, may Allah be pleased with him, that he should march to Iraq and start operations in the region of Uballah where the two rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, met. Four other columns each under the command of Muthanna, Madhaar, Harmalah, and Salama were also directed to proceed to Iraq to reinforce the main Muslim army under the command of Khalid Ibn Waleed.

Uballah, being a junction of many land routes, was the gateway of Iraq and commanded great strategic importance. The Governor of the district was Hormuz, a veteran General and a skilful administrator. He was an imperialist, very haughty and an intolerable man. He held the Arabs in contempt, and thus he was very disliked. His harshness and high handedness became the subject of a saying among the local Arabs: "more hateful than Hormuz," and "there is no infidel more wicked than Hormuz".

As soon as Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed received orders to march to Iraq, he sent a letter to Hormuz calling upon him to accept Islam. The letter read: "Surrender to Islam, and you will live in peace. In the alternative you may agree to the payment of *Jizyah*, and you and your people will be under our protection. Otherwise you will have only yourself to blame for the consequences. I have brought you a people who desire death as ardently as you desire life." Thus the letter gave Hormuz three options: to embrace Islam, to pay the *Jizyah*, and fighting.

Getting no reply, Khalid divided his army into three regiments of 6,000 men each. Hormuz, on the other hand, mustered his forces and set out from Uballah to encounter the Muslim forces. On the direct route from Uballah to Yamaamah, the first stage was Kazimah, and Hormuz decided to fight the Muslims at that place. His idea was that the Muslim forces should be kept away from Uballah. On arrival at Kazimah, Hormuz deployed his army with a center and two wings, the right and the left. His men were linked together with chains, and in this state of affairs the Persians awaited the arrival of the Muslim forces.

Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed gave a slip to the Persians, and instead of following the direct route to Uballah via Kazimah, he followed the indirect route via Hafeer. Hafeer was much closer to Uballah than Kazimah, and when Hormuz came to know that Khalid had already reached Hafeer, he was very upset. He immediately ordered his forces to march to Hafeer. When they reached Hafeer, they found that the Muslim forces had left for Kazimah. The Persians had no option but to march back to Kazimah. When the Persian forces reached Kazimah, Khalid allowed them no time to rest. As the Muslim forces were already deployed for battle, the Persians were forced to go into action. The Persian forces were linked in chains, and it was due to the use of these chains that the battle of Kazimah is called the "Battle of Chains."

Hormuz wanted to cut the fight short by murdering Khalid treacherously. So, no sooner had the two armies engaged in battle than he challenged Khalid to fight a duel. Hormuz instructed some of his men to remain close to him, so that when he gave a signal they should fall on Khalid and kill him. Khalid at once dismounted and before long his foe was killed.

The death of Hormuz had demoralized the Persians, but nevertheless, they fought hard. The Muslims assailed vehemently, but the chain-linked Persian infantry withstood all attacks. The Muslims redoubled their attacks, and the Persians were forced to fall back. The Persians found their chains to be a death trap, and as they retreated held together in chains they suffered heavy causalities. Before the night set in, the Muslims had won the battle.

Thousands of Persians were killed, and thousands of them were taken captives. The war booty that fell into the hands of the Muslims comprised wagons, armor, stores, costly garments, horses and a good amount of money. Four-fifth of the booty was distributed among the Muslim soldiers and one-fifth was sent to the Caliph at Madeenah. So large was the booty that the share of each cavalryman came to a thousand dirhams. The booty included the 100,000-dirham cap of Hormuz studded with diamonds and pearls. The Caliph offered this cap as a present to Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed. The battle of the Chains at Kazima unchained for the Muslims the gate of Iraq. The so-called uncivilized Arabs had defeated the Persians so proud of their civilization extending over a thousand years.

The Battle of Madhaar:

When Hormuz knew of the march of Khalid and his forces to Kazimah, he sent to the king of Persia, Aradesheer, seeking help and reinforcement. The king dispatched an army from Madaa'in, the capital, under the command of Qaarin Ibn Quryans. The Persian army marched along the left bank of the Tigris. They crossed the Tigris at Madhaar, and there they came to know of the defeat of the Persians at Kazimah. Qaarin camped at Madhaar, and soon the remnants of the army of Hormuz who had escaped from Kazimah joined the camp.

Qaarin was shocked that the imperial army of Persia under such a General as Hormuz should have been defeated by the uncouth Arabs. He resolved that he would avenge the defeat of Kazimah and drive the Arabs to the desert.

In the meantime, the advance guard of Al-Muthanna, who scoured the countryside, came to know of the Persian concentration at Madhaar. Al-Muthanna sent news of the situation to Khalid and halted opposite the Persians at Madhaar. On the other hand, Qaarin got information that some Muslim forces were lurking in the neighborhood, and his plan was to fall on this Muslim force and destroy it, before it could get help from the main Muslim army.

Khalid realized the danger that beset the column of Al-Muthanna. Khalid was keen that he should destroy the Persian force under Qaarin while the impact of the defeat at Kazimah was still fresh in the Persian mind. By forced marches, Khalid reached Madhaar in the month of Safar, 12 AH, before Qaarin could take any action against the column of Al-Muthanna. The Persian forces fought with great tenacity, but the Muslims finally achieved victory. Qaarin and almost 30,000 soldiers of the Persian army were killed in the battle. It was also the second victory the Muslims won against the Persians. Heavy spoils were won in the battle, which exceeded the booty gained at Kazimah. Four-fifths of the spoils were distributed among the soldiers and one-fifth share was sent to Madeenah.

The Battle of Walajahh:

Being weakened by two successive defeats, the Persian king, Ardsheer, ordered the assembling of two more Persian armies to fight the Muslims. One army was placed under the command of Andarzaghar, a military Governor of considerable standing who had grown up among the Arabs, and was familiar with the Arab way of fighting. He commanded considerable popularity among the Arab tribes allied with the Persians. In addition to the regular Persian army, Andarzaghar was commissioned to raise contingents from the Arab auxiliaries. The other force was placed under the direct command of Bahman, the Commander-in-Chief of the Persian forces.

Andarzaghar was required to move with his army to grapple with the Muslims. The other force under Bahman was to follow after some time. The strength of the army of Andarzarghar was very considerable, and if the army of Bahman reinforced it, the Persian army would likely to assume formidable dimensions.

Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed, may Allah be pleased with him, weighed up the situation and worked out his strategy. He left two battalions in ambush, so as to attack the enemy from the rear at the right moment. Khalid's strategy, therefore, was that he should tackle the army of Andarzaghar before the main army under Bahman could join it.

By forced marches, Khalid reached Walajah. As Andarzaghar surveyed the field, the Muslim army did not consist of more than 10,000 persons, and the Muslim cavalry was nowhere to be seen. The strength of the Persian army, on the contrary, was thrice the strength of the Muslim army, and Andarzaghar thought that in no time he would be able to make mince meat of the Muslim force and thus avenge the defeats of Kazimah and Madhaar.

The two armies met with a clash of steel, and the battle raged with unabated fury. The Muslims struck at the heavily armed Persians, but the Persians stood their ground, and repulsed all attacks. Then Andarzaghar ordered a counter attack. The Muslims were able to hold the attack for some time, but as the Persians intensified their pressure, the Muslims began to lose ground and fell back. Andarzaghar exhorted his men to step up their pressure for victory was very much in sight.

At that critical juncture, Khalid gave a signal. The next moment over the crest of the ridge that stretched behind the Persian army appeared columns of mounted Muslim warriors. Raising shouts of "Allahu Akbar" (Allah is Greatest), the Muslim cavalry charged at a gallop, and the plain of Walajahh shook under the thundering hooves of the Arab horse. The Persians who were pressing forward were now caught in a trap. When they turned their face to meet the charge of the Muslim cavalry, the main Muslim army delivered a furious charge. The ring of steel became tighter round the Persians, and in whatever direction they turned, sword and dagger struck them down. Andarzaghar fled from the battlefield and penetrated deep into the desert where he lost his way and died of thirst.

The battle of Walajah ended in a victory for the Muslims. That was the third consecutive victory of the Muslims over the Persians. The victory of Walajah established the superiority of the Muslim fighting forces. Once again a large booty fell into the hands of the Muslims. Four-fifth of the spoils were distributed among the Muslim warriors on the spot, and the remaining one-fifth were sent to Madeenah. Khalid's remark was: "Behold the incredible heap of spoils! We have attained two goals! Victory in Allah's Cause, and amazing wealth."

The Battle of Ulays:

After their defeats in the battles of Kazimah, Madhaar and Walajah, the Persians felt that it was necessary to change their strategy. They decided to settle Christian Arabs in preference to Muslim ones. In pursuance of this policy, after the battle of Walajah the Christian Arabs mustered at Ulays, which was 10 miles from Walajah in another bid to drive the Muslims from Iraq. Ardasheer gave orders to Bahmaan to lend them full support. Also, the Persian commander-in-chief decided to send another Persian force to Ulays to reinforce the Christian Arabs. This force was commanded by Jabaan.

When the Muslims heard of the assembling of Christian Arabs and Persians at Ulays, Khalid mustered his forces to encounter them. The Muslims launched an attack against the Persians, but the latter stood as a rock and showed no signs of weakness. The Muslims renewed the charge, but expecting help from Bahmaan the Persians proved stubborn and persistent and offered stiff resistance. The Muslim attack did not yield the desired result, and as they appeared to lose force, a counter attack from the Persians was expected. In view of the limited space, there were no possibilities of a maneuver here, and Khalid was afraid that in a frontal attack, the Persians in view of their superiority of strength had the advantage and were likely to carry the day.

At this critical situation, Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed, may Allah be pleased with him, resorted to Almighty Allah and prayed for victory: "O Allah, if you grant us victory, I shall see that no enemy warrior is left alive until the river runs red with their blood." It was a typical soldier's pledge, and it inspired Khalid and his men to greater sacrifice and fighting. The Persian resistance ultimately broke down. By the afternoon a greater part of the Persian and Christian Arab army had been shattered, and the battle was over. The Muslims had secured a brilliant victory against the Persians for the fourth time.

Of all the battles fought by Khalid, the battle of Ulays was the toughest and the fiercest. According to At-Tabari, 70,000 Persian and Christian Arabs lost their lives as a result of the battle of Ulays. The Ulays disaster unnerved the Persian and the Christian Arabs. The local inhabitants of the region of Ulays entered into a pact with the Muslims. They agreed to pay the *Jizyah* in lieu of Muslim protection. They also undertook to act as informers and guides for the Muslims.

The Conquest of Al-Heerah:

After the battle of Ulays, the road to Al-Heerah lay open. Khalid and his army immediately took the road to Al-Heerah.

This city had been the capital of the Iraqi Arabs since the second century of the Christian era. After the battle of Ulays all the rebels took refuge there. Its Persian governor, Al-Marzabaan (Azarbeh), came to know of the advance of the Muslim force and so he set about defending the city. He sent forward a cavalry group commanded by his son to hold the advance of the Muslims. This cavalry group was commissioned to dam the Euphrates in order to hold the advance of the Muslim army.

In the advance to Al-Heerah, while the main Muslim army marched by riding on camels and horses, the heavy military loads were carried by boat on the river. The Muslim forces had traversed a short distance only, when due to the damming of the river, the water level fell, and the boats carrying the military loads were grounded. Seeing this situation, Khalid dashed off at great speed on the road to Al-Heerah at the head of a cavalry detachment. At Badqalah, some twelve miles from Al-Heerah, the son of Azarbeh and his column were surprised, and were cut down to one man. Khalid thereafter opened the dam, and as the water level rose the Muslim army resumed their advance by land as well as the river.

Khalid was expecting that he would have to fight for Al-Heerah. Therefore, instead of approaching Al-Heerah from the front, Khalid made a detour and approached the city from the rear. When the Muslims reached the gates of the city, there was no Persian army to oppose them. Azarbeh came to know of the death of his son and was smitten with grief. In the meantime Ardsheer, the emperor of Persia, died and Persia experienced a succession of disputes. That unnerved Azarbeh. He abandoned Al-Heerah, and fled with the Persian forces to Madyan leaving the city to its fate.

When Khalid reached Al-Heerah, he found that Christian Arabs had locked themselves in four citadels and refused to surrender. Khalid ordered the Muslims to give them three options: to embrace Islam, to pay the *Jizyah*, or to fight. However, the people of Al-Heerah refused to accept Islam or to pay the *Jiziyah*.

Refusing to accept Islam or to pay the *Jizyah*, the inhabitants resisted the Muslim attack, but the fortresses were stormed. Five delegates met Khalid to negotiate peace terms. According to the terms of the agreement, they had to pay the Muslims 190,000 dirhams every year in return for protection.

After signing the pact, Khalid led a mass victory prayer at Al-Heerah. When the news of the conquest of Al-Heerah reached Madeenah, along with the amount of *Jiziyah* collected from the people of Al-Heerah, Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, led a thanksgiving prayer at Madeenah. Central Iraq was now under the complete occupation of the Muslims. After the peace treaty was concluded, similar treaties were signed between Khalid and other dignitaries; and before long all the regions between the Arabian Gulf and Al-Heerah, which extended as far as the Tigris, passed under Muslim control.

Thereafter, Khalid sent two letters to the people of Persia, one for the kings and another for the masses and their Persian leaders, to invite them to embrace Islam and warn them of showing stubbornness and resistance. The First letter read: "All praise and thanks are due to Allah, Who has overthrown your regime, weakened your power, and set your word apart. If He had not done this, there would have been tumult and oppression on earth, and great mischief. Embrace Islam, and we will leave you to live in peace on your lands, and we will set for another people to call on them (to embrace Islam). If you do not do this, you will have to accept this forcefully through a people who desire death as ardently as you desire life." The second letter read: "In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful, from Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed to the ruler of Persia: embrace Islam in order to live in peace. If you do not, you will live under my protection in return for the *Jizyah*. Otherwise, you are up against people who love death just as much as you love wine."

Khalid's letters reached Persia while the people were disputing over who would rule the country after the death of Ardsheer, but they were all unanimous that Khalid must be fought and driven away from Iraq.

The Conquest of Al-Anbaar:

With the conquest of Al-Heerah, Khalid had achieved the objective that Abu Bakr had set for him. Having succeeded in his objective, a man like Khalid could not be expected to rest on oars. After taking stock of the situation around him, Khalid decided to advance further afield.

In fact, he was following the instructions of Abu Bakr, who forbade him to leave Al-Heerah unless his comrade, `Iyaad Ibn Ghanam, arrived after subduing Doomat Al-Jandal, which was a long way to the south. But Khalid grew impatient, as he was anxious to continue his conquests. He wanted to spread Islam everywhere, so he looked westwards along the banks of the Euphrates and saw Al-Anbaar. It was an important town and commercial center to which caravans came from Ash-Shaam and Persia. Khalid chose Al-Anbaar as his next objective. Leaving Al-Qa`qaa` Ibn `Amr in charge of Al-Heerah, he marched quickly to the city and lay siege to it.

However, the governor of the district, Sheerzad, decided to defend the town with the help of his Persian garrison and the Arab auxiliaries. The town was protected by walls and a large deep moat. The town of Al-Anbaar was situated at a height, and the Muslim army had to camp on the low plain below the town. As the Persians saw the height that intervened between them and the Muslim army they felt that their position was invulnerable. The Persians stood on the top of the walls of the citadel carelessly, in groups, looking at the Muslim army as if they were watching a tournament.

Khalid collected the best of his archers, and commanded them to shoot at the eyes of the Persians. The Muslim archers shot several rounds, and as a result thousands of Persians lost their eyes. Because of this action the battle of Al-Anbaar came to be called 'the Battle of the Eyes'. As a result of the efforts of the Muslim archers, a panic was created in the ranks of the Persians, and Sheerzad sent an offer to negotiate terms. Khalid rejected the offer and demanded that the surrender should be unconditional. Under the circumstances, Sheerzad decided to continue resistance.

The moat stood between the Persians and the Muslims, and the problem before Khalid was to cross the moat. Khalid selected a point where the moat was the narrowest. Here he placed his archers in position to shoot at the enemy ruthlessly. Under the cover of these archers Khalid pushed ahead his army. The old and lean camels of the army were slaughtered and dumped into the moat. As the pile of carcasses rose, it formed a bridge over which the Muslim army crossed the moat and assaulted the fort. Finding his position insecure, Sheerzad made another offer to surrender provided the Persian army was allowed to withdraw in safety. Khalid agreed to the offer on the condition that the Persians did not carry any arms or other property with them.

Thereafter the Muslims occupied the town of Al-Anbaar. The Christian Arabs, the auxiliaries of the Persians, had no option but to lay down arms after the withdrawal of the Persian forces. They agreed to pay the *Jizyah*. Khalid stayed at Al-Anbaar for a few days, and received the submission of the tribes living in the neighborhood.

The Conquest of `Ayn At-Tamr:

Khalid left a garrison at Al-Anbaar under the command of Az-Zabraqaan Ibn Badr and himself marched further afield with the main Muslim army. The Muslim army re-crossed the Euphrates, and marched southward. This time his objective was `Ayn At-Tamr, a large fortified town surrounded by date palms which was of strategic importance and garrisoned by Persian forces and the Arab auxiliaries.

The Persian forces at `Ayn At-Tamr were commanded by Mahraan Ibn Bahram who was a skillful military commander. The Christian Arabs belonged to the tribe of Namr and led by their chief `Aqqah Ibn Abi `Aqqah. `Aqqah was a man of formidable dimensions and enjoyed great reputation for his prowess. He was a devout Christian and was very hostile to Islam.

\`Aqqah was proud of his bodily strength and Arab lineage. In a war council with Mahran, \`Aqqah volunteered to fight against the Muslims with his men. He argued: "Diamond cuts diamond, and we Christian Arabs know best as to how to fight the Muslim Arabs. Let us fight the Muslims in the first instance". Mahran accepted the offer and said, "You are right; you are the best men to fight against the Muslims. Go ahead, and give the Muslims a tough fight. We will remain close to you and will come to your assistance when you need reinforcement."

The Persian forces remained at \`Ayn At-Tamr, but the Christian Arab auxiliaries under the command of \`Aqqah marched on the road to Al-Anbaar to intercept the advance of the Muslim force under the command of Khalid. The two forces met at a distance of some ten miles from \`Ayn At-Tamr. As soon as the two forces came in sight, they went in for action immediately. Khalid deployed the Muslim forces in the usual way, the center and the wings. Khalid had heard of the boastings and vaunts of \`Aqqah, and his plan was to take \`Aqqah captive and alive. \`Aqqah led the center of his force and with his heavy body he looked very defiant. When the battle began, the wings of the Muslim army charged with considerable vehemence, but the center under the direct command of Khalid charged less vehemently. That gave \`Aqqah the impression that the center of the Muslim army was showing signs of exhaustion. He decided to avail of this advantage. He launched an attack at the central wing of the Muslim force with considerable vehemence. Before this attack, the Muslim center withdrew. That made the central wing of \`Aqqah's force rush forward. Such impetuous advance cut the central wing of \`Aqqah's force off from the other wings of the army of the Christian Arabs. At this stage the Muslim force somersaulted, and launched a furious charge enveloping the forces of `Aqqah. In the hand to hand fighting that followed, the men surrounding `Aqqah were cut to pieces, and `Aqqah was captured alive according to plan.

With the capture of `Aqqah, the Christian Arabs lost nerve, and fled to `Ayn At-Tamr, hoping to be reinforced by the Persian forces. When the Arab fugitives reached `Ayn At-Tamr, they found that the Persian forces under Mahran had already evacuated the town. Finding themselves abandoned and betrayed, the Christian Arabs rushed into the fort, closed the gates and prepared for a siege.

The Muslims soon arrived at `Ayn At-Tamr, and laid siege to the fort. `Aqqah and other prisoners in the Muslim camp were paraded outside the fort, and that had an unnerving effect on the defenders. The Christian Arabs soon asked for terms, but Khalid said that there would be no terms and that the surrender must be unconditional. After a few days, the resistance of the Christian Arabs broke down, and they surrendered unconditionally. `Aqqah and the leaders of the Christian Arabs were beheaded. The people agreed to pay *Jizyah*. A huge booty was collected and distributed according to the usual formula.

At `Ayn At-Tamr there was a monastery where boys were trained for priesthood. These boys embraced Islam. Among these boys was Nusayr whose son Moosa (Moosa Ibn Nusayr) later became the Governor of Africa, and the Conqueror of Spain.

The Conquest of Doomat Al-Jandal:

Doomat Al-Jandal is a strategically important place which lies about 300 miles to the south of `Ayn At-Tamr. It forms a juncture between Arabia, Iraq and Syria.

After the death of the Prophet , Abu Bakr sent a column under `Iyaad Ibn Ghanam to conquer Daumatul Jandal. `Iyaad lay siege to Daumatul Jandal, but failed to capture it. The siege lasted over a year, but still the resistance of the defenders was not broken. Many Christian Arabs driven from Iraq as a result of the operations of Khalid found refuge at Daumatul Jandal, and that created further difficulties for `Iyaad.

At this critical juncture, `Iyaad wrote to Khalid to rush to his aid. Also, Abu Bakr asked Khalid to go to the help of `Iyaad. Khalid received the call for help when he was at `Ayn At-Tamr. Khalid decided to assist `Iyaad forthwith. Leaving a garrison at 'Ayn-at-Tamr, Khalid marched on with his main force to the relief of Daumatul Jandal.

The Christian Arab forces at Daumatul Jandal differed in fighting the Muslim army. One of their leaders advised them to negotiate peace with Khalid, but his people rejected his advice and they decided to fight.

The battle arose between Khalid and the people of Doomat Al-Jandal. Khalid pressed the siege of Daumatul Jandal until he ultimately took hold of it. Over 2000 Christian Arabs were killed in the battle. The people of Daumatul Jandal were offered amnesty in agreement to pay *Jizyah*. Immense booty fell to the Muslims.

When the news of the fall of Daumatul Jandal was communicated to Abu Bakr at Madina, he felt happy and proud

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of the exploits of Khalid who had succeeded where others had failed.

The Battle of Firaad:

Although the Arab tribes were defeated many times, they did not stop plotting against Khalid. This forced him to march northwards to deal with their incessant plots and intrigues.

In the face of the Muslims, the Byzantine garrison decided to come to the aid of the Persian garrison. The united forces of the Persians, the Byzantines and the Christian Arab auxiliary numbered the Muslim force tenfold. Impressed by the imposing array of the coalition, the Byzantine General sent a haughty message to Khalid demanding an unconditional surrender. Khalid responded that he would reply on the battlefield.

Khalid gave the enemy the option to cross the Euphrates. As soon as the enemy had crossed the Euphrates, Khalid commanded the Muslim force to go into action. The united forces of the Persians and the Byzantines had the river at their back. As the front ranks of both the forces committed themselves in the fighting, Khalid fixed his enemy on either flank with the help of the rear wings. Moving swiftly, the Muslims dashed for the bridge on the river, and succeeded in occupying it. The enemy was thus held in a pincer movement. The Muslims intensified the attack and tightened the noose around the neck of the enemy. In the mortal conflict that ensued, the enemy soon lost the ground. The withdrawing forces of the Persians and the Byzantines either jumped into the river in a state of horror or confusion or allowed themselves to be squeezed to death. It was a bloody battle, and over 100,000 enemy soldiers fell on the battleground. The battle was soon over and Firaad, the last stronghold of the Persians, fell to the

Muslims. The battle of Firaad added further luster to the Muslim arms.

After the battle of Firaad, Khalid felt a great desire to perform *Hajj* to show gratitude to Allah. Yet he was afraid that during his absence from `Iraq, the malicious tribes would seize the opportunity and rise against his deputies. So, he let the army march slowly back to Al-Heerah and, pretending all the time that he was in the rear, departed secretly to Makkah accompanied by a few of his attendants. Khalid managed to perform the pilgrimage and go back to Iraq and enter Al-Heerah with the returning army without being noticed by anyone. When the news of Khalid's *Hajj* reached Abu Bakr, he became furious and sent him a letter asking him not to indulge in such adventure again and to march to Ash-Shaam.

The Conquest of Ash-Shaam:

By the beginning of the 13th year of Hijra, Abu Bakr As-Sideeq, may Allah be pleased with him, had already decided to muster an army and dispatch it to Ash-Shaam (the Levant) after his return from Hajj. This was in compliance with the example of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Allah's words:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ قَاتِلُواْ الَّذِينَ يَلُونَكُم مِّنَ الْكُفَّارِ وَلْيَجِدُواْ فِيكُمْ غِلْظَةً وَاعْلَمُواْ أَنَّ اللّهَ مَعَ
الْمُتَّقِينَ (سورة التوبة: ١٢٣)

"O ye who believe fight the Unbelievers who gird you about, and let them find firmness in you: and know that Allah is with those who fear him." (At-Tawbah: 123)

فَإِن تَوَلَّوْاْ فَقُلْ حَسْبِيَ اللّهُ لا إِلَـــهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَهُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيم (ســـــورة التوبة: ١٢٩)

"Now, if they turn away (O Muhammad) say: Allah sufficeth me. There is no God save Him. In Him have I put my trust, and He is Lord of the Tremendous Throne."(At-Tawbah: 129)

He led the army to Ash-Shaam, and reached it in very hot weather, but only after passing through a great deal of hardship. The Prophet , peace and blessings be upon him, a year before his death, dispatched Usamah Ibn Zayd as commander of an army to set off on a campaign to the areas surrounding the Levant. After Abu Bakr had controlled the whole Arabian Peninsula, he dispatched an army under the command of Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed, may Allah be pleased with him, under expedition to Iraq, with the intention of approaching the Levant as well. So he sent a letter to `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas, whom he had assigned to levy the alms of Quda`ah along with Al-Waleed Ibn `Uqbah, urging him to join the army that was to be sent to the Levant.

When Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, mobilized the army, he gave an eloquent speech to the soldiers. He first praised Allah and then began to urge the people to perform Jihad in the Cause of Almighty Allah. Afterwards, Abu Bakr started to divide the army into brigades and to assign the leader of each brigade.

The Battle of Yarmook:

The Battle of Yarmook took place in 15 AH after the campaign of Damascus. When the Byzantines knew that the

Muslim army was advancing towards the Levant, they grew terrified to the extent that they sent a message to Hercules, who was said to be in Jerusalem at that time – some said that he was at Hims– informing him of the situation. When Hercules knew that the Muslim army was to approach the Levant, he said to his people: "The Muslims are people of a new religion and no one is capable of facing them. Obey me and make peace with the Muslims on the condition that they take half the taxes of Ash-Sham and that the Byzantine Mountains be left under the control of the Byzantines. If you refuse to do what I tell you, the Muslims will conquer you and take Ash-Sham and trap you in the Byzantine Mountains."

Hercules then went to Hims and mobilized an army to face the Muslims. He sent his brother Tudhraaq to lead 90,000 men to stand against `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas, may Allah be pleased with him. Jirjah Ibn Budhayha was placed at the head of 60,000 men to face Yazeed Ibn Abi Sufyaan and his brigade. He also sent Ad-Daraqaas to Sharhabeel Ibn Hasnah and Al-Qayqulaan to lead 60,000 soldiers to confront Abu `Ubaydah and his men.

By mobilizing such a large army, the Byzantine army pledged to deter the Muslim one. The commanders of the Muslim army sent a message to Abu Bakr As-Sideeq, may Allah be pleased with him, informing him about the large army that the Byzantines had drummed up to confront them. Abu Bakr replied: "Unite and struggle in the Cause of Allah and He will grant you victory. You are Allah's helpers, and Allah helps those who help in His Cause, and He turns down those who disbelieve in Him. You will not be defeated because of your small number, but you may be defeated because of sins. So watch out for that. Each leader should pray in congregation with men under his command and you should all be united."

Abu Bakr then decided that Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed should lead the Muslim army because he was the best man to carry out that mission.

Muhammad Ibn `Aa'id narrates on the authority of `Abdel-'A`la who says that Sa`eed Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez said: "The Muslim troops were only 24,000 men while the Byzantine troops were 120,000." One thousand of the army were Companions of the Prophet , peace and blessings be upon him, and 100 of them had taken part in the great Battle of Badr.

Al-Waleed narrates on the authority of Safwaan that `Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn Jubayr said: "The Byzantines camped between the Monastery of Ayyoob and Al-Yarmook while the Muslims camped on the other side behind the river so as to receive supplies from Madeenah. It is said that Khalid joined them after the Companions had besieged the Byzantines for the whole month of Rabee` Al-Awwal. When Rabee` Al-Awwal was over and fighting became possible due to the scarcity of water, the Muslims asked Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, for more men, so he sent them Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed as he considered him the most appropriate choice.

When Khalid arrived, he found that the Muslim army was scattered; Abu `Ubaydah's brigade was on one side, `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas' was on the other and Yazeed's were on a different side. He saw at once that he must organize the army properly in order to win the battle and it meant one single command instead of the four. So he spoke to the troops ordering them to unite, and gathered the other commanders and said, "We are fighting for the Sake of Allah. We must all forget ourselves. We cannot afford to be split under many commanders. That would be a help to the enemy. I suggest that we should take turns to command the army. If you agree to that, let me be the commander for the first day of the battle." They all agreed with the plan, obeyed him and gathered to face the enemy in Jumadah Al-Aakherah. Khalid took the chief command.

After they had united, Khalid gave a speech to the army advising soldiers to avoid conceit and tyranny and to be faithful in their struggle in the Cause of Almighty Allah. He urged the Muslims to fight bravely and exert their utmost effort to force the Byzantine army to retreat otherwise they will never have victory over them.

The Byzantine army was tremendous and so was the Muslim one. Khalid, may Allah be pleased with him, arranged 36 - 40 battalions, each consisting of 100 men. He appointed Abu `Ubaydah, may Allah be pleased with him, as the leader of the center, `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas as the leader of the right wing of the battlefield and Yazeed Ibn Sufyaan as the leader of the left. Abu Ad-Dardaa' was the judge and Abu Sufyaan Ibn Harb used to urge the men to fight bravely. Al-Miqdaad Ibn Al-Aswad was the one who used to recite the Qur'an and in particular Surah, "Al-Anfaal" (the one pertaining to battles).

Muslim women played a notable role in this battle. They formed a battalion, which stood at the back of the army. They would supply water to the men, and dress their wounds. When the army showed signs of weakness, these women would shout words of courage to boost their morale. These words put a new heart into retreating men. They dashed forth like lightning and sowed death among enemy lines.

While the battle was raging, Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed, may Allah be pleased with him, received a message from Madeenah informing him that Abu Bakr As-Sideeq, may Allah be pleased with him, had passed away, and they had appointed `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him, as his successor. The message also said that the new caliph, `Umar Ibn Al-

Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him, had removed Khalid, may Allah be pleased with him, as commander-in-chief and appointed Abu `Ubaydah Ibn Al-Jarraah, may Allah be pleased with him, to the post. Khalid read the letter and preferred to keep such news secret lest it should discourage the army and cause them to lose heart at that critical time. He informed Abu `Ubaydah that the command of the army had passed to him. Then he hid the message in his clothes till the battle ended with the triumph given to the Muslims. He delivered the message to Abu `Ubaydah.

The letter had no effect whatsoever on Khalid. He went on fighting as desperately as ever. After the battle was over, Khalid's dismissal became known. Someone said to him, "How is it that the news did not dampen your spirit at all?" "I was not fighting for `Umar's sake," replied Khalid, "I was fighting solely for the Cause of Allah."

Sa`eed Ibn Al-Musayyeb narrates on the authority of his father who said that when the battle was coming to an end, the Muslims heard a sound saying: "O victory of Allah, come nearer! Stick to your posts, Muslims!" When they looked, they found that it was Abu Sufyaan under the banner of his son Yazeed. Khalid spent that night at the tent of Tudhraaq, Hercules's brother who had run away along with other Byzantines. The Muslims remained around the tent killing the remaining enemy soldiers. Tudhraaq was eventually killed and he left 30 tents full of luxurious items. In the morning the Muslims collected the spoils of war and were happy with them, but they were sad about the death of Abu Bakr As-Sideeq, may Allah be pleased with him. However, Allah recompensed them with `Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, as successor to Abu Bakr.

The battle had a profound effect in undermining the morale of the Byzantines, as they could not stand the Muslim army after that in spite of their huge number. Hercules made several attempts to defeat the Muslims, but finding it futile he stopped all further attempts. History books still quote the emperor's words of farewell, "Farewell, Syria! I do not think we shall meet again."

On the contrary, the battle highly affected the Muslims' spirit and booted their morale. They began to spread Islam in the East and West, feeling confident of Allah's Victory and His Promise to them that they would achieve supremacy on earth:

"وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُم فِي الأَرْضِ كَمَا
اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُم مِّن بَعْدِ
خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي لا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا وَمَن كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ"
(سورة النور:٥٥)

"Allah has promised, to those among you who believe and work righteous deeds, that He will, of a surety, grant them in the land, inheritance (of power), as He granted it to those before them; that He will establish in authority their religion- the one which He has chosen for them; and that He will change (their state), after the fear in which they (lived), to one of security and peace: They will worship Me (alone) and not associate aught with Me.' If any do reject Faith after this, they are rebellious and wicked." (An-Noor: 55)

It is said that the battle of Yarmook was the last battle to take place in the lifetime of Abu Bakr As-Sideeq, may Allah be pleased with him.

Invaluable Sermons of As-Sideeq:

Abu Bakr was known for his eloquence and oratory. He used to address the Faithful every week on Fridays. His Khutbahs and speeches were the specimen of masterly eloquence; every word thereof vibrated with superb faith and appealed directly to the heart. All his sermons and addresses have not been preserved. Only a few of his sermons and addresses have come down to us, and these classical addresses which are veritable gems of literature evoke our admiration.

Al-Haakim and Al-Bayhaqyy report on the authority of `Abdullaah Ibn Hakeem, who narrates: Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, gave us a Khutbah one day. He praised Almighty Allah, and thanked Him as He deserves, then said: "I commend you to be conscious and mindful of Allah, to praise Him as He deserves, and to strike a balance between hope (in what He has) and fear (of His Punishment), for Allah praised Prophet Zakariyya (Zechariah) and the his household and said:

"إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَيَدْعُونَنَا رَغَبًا وَرَهَبًا وَكَانُوا لَنَا خَاشِعِينَ"(الأنبياء: ٩٠)

"They used to call on us with love And reverence, and humble themselves before us." (Al-Anbiaa': 90)

Therefore, know, O servants of Allah, that the Lord holds your lives as a pledge for what is due to Him; He has taken your covenants regarding this, and has purchased of you what is little and perishable in exchange for what is eternal and abundant. And this is the Book of Allah among you; its light cannot be extinguished, nor its wonders end. So, seek you illumination from its light, and judge your affairs according to

His Book, and seek light from it for the "Day of Darkness". Verily He has created you solely for His worship and has appointed for you guardian angels, who are honorable and write down your deeds, and know all that which you do. And you should know, O servants of Allah, that you proceed and draw nigh to an appointed time, the knowledge of which is absolutely concealed from you.

So if meet your end before fulfilling and discharging Allah's duties and obligations, then do so, though you will never be able to do so except with the Will of Allah. You should vie with one another in fulfilling and discharging your duties and obligations till your appointed times are completed, lest they (the appointed times) cast you upon the evilest of your works, and verily there are some who have made over the obligations of their appointed times to serve others, and have taken no heed of themselves. Therefore, I warn you to be like them. Then make haste and flee, for behind you is a nimble pursuer, swift of deed (i.e. death).

Yahya Ibn Katheer reports that Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, used to say in his Khutbahs: "Where are now the comely, beautiful people of good countenance, exulting in their youth? Where are now the monarchs who built cities and entrenched them round about? Where are now those who used to win battles with crushing defeats? Verily their pillars were overthrown when fortune betrayed them, and they went down into the darkness of graves. Make haste, flee, flee!" (Reported by Ibn Abi Ad-Dunya, Ahmad, and Abu Na`eem)

Moosa Ibn `Uqbah reports that Abu Bakr As-Sideeq once gave the following Khutbah: "All praise and thanks are due to Almighty Allah. I práise Him, seek His Help, and beseech Him to honor us after death; your term and mine have drawn nigh. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, with

Whom there is no associate, and I bear witness that Muḫammad is His servant and Messenger. He sent him with the truth, to give glad tidings (to those who believe) and warn (those who disbelieve), that it may give admonition to any (who are) alive, and that the charge may be proved against those who reject (the Truth). Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger has succeeded, and whoever disobeys them has gone astray in error which is clear. I advice you to be conscious and mindful of Almighty Allah, and to hold fast to His Command which He has revealed to you and guided you thereof. One of the fundamental things in Islam after the Word of Faith[7], is hearing and obeying the orders of those whom Almighty Allah has put in charge of us. He who obeys Allah and those who enjoin good and forbid evil, has succeeded and carried out what is due on them. Beware of following vain desire, for verily he prospers who is protected from vain desire, greed and anger; and beware you of pride, for what pride belongs to him who is created out of dust, to dust he returns, and whom the worms devour after death, who is alive today, and tomorrow may be dead.

Therefore act uprightly from day to day and hour to hour. Beware of the curse of the oppressed, and prepare yourself for death. Be you patient for every work is accomplished through patience. Be you careful, for carefulness is profitable. Do (good deeds) for Allah accepts good deeds. Refrain from doing things Allah has warned he will punish those who do them, and vie you with one another in hastening to do the things Allah has promised to have mercy on those who do them. Take heed and understand what I am saying. Be conscious and take care, for Allah has declared to you things for which He destroyed those nations that preceded you, and informed you of things through which He delivered those who preceded you.

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[7] I.e. the testification that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger.

Verily Allah has made it clear to you in His Book what is lawful and what is prohibited, the works He likes and those He dislikes. I spare no effort in maintaining your well-being, and Allah is the only Helper; there is no power or strength but through Him. Know that so long as you are sincere to your Lord in any work, you will be obedient to Him, your good luck will be preserved, and you will prosper. And regard what you do voluntary for the sake of your religion as supererogatory acts, to expiate your past sins.

Give out charitable donations even when you are poor-stricken. O Servants of Allah, think of your brethren and companions who have passed away. They are now recompensed according to the deeds they did in their lives; some enjoy bliss and others doomed to misery after death.

Verily, Allah has no partner, and between Him and any of His creatures there is no mediator that can bestow good upon them or avert from them evil save in His worship and obedience to His Commands, for verily there is no good after which comes Hell-Fire, and no evil after which comes Heaven. This is my speech to you, and I seek Allah's Forgiveness for you and me. Send peace and blessings upon your Prophet , peace and blessings be upon him. And may Allah's Peace, mercy, and blessings be upon you.

Some of His Wise Sayings:

Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, was of a contemplative bent of mind. He often expressed his thoughts in words conspicuous for his wisdom. Some of his sayings have come down to us, and these show the depths and dimensions of his thought and philosophy.

Sa`eed Ibn Mansoor in his *Sunan* reports on the authority of Mu`awiyah Ibn Qurrah, that Abu Bakr As-Sideeq, may Allah be pleased with him, used to say the following *Du`aa'*: "O Allah, make the best of my life its end, the best of deed is its end, and the best of days is when I stand before You."

On the authority of Hasan who says that Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, used to pray: "O Allah, I beseech You seeking the best in my life. O Allah, make the last of what You wish to give me of good things Your Pleasure and the highest ranks in Paradise." (Reported by Ahmad.)

Ibn Abi Malik narrates: "When praying for a dead man, Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, used to say: "O Allah, people, wealth, and kith and kin have forsaken this servant of Yours. The sins he committed are so grave, but You are the Most Gracious, Most Merciful."

As far as death is concerned, Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, is reported to have said: "Have an earnestness for death, and you will have life."

While condoling the death of someone, Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, used to say to the bereaved family: "There is no calamity in patience, and no benefit in lamentation. Death is easiest to bear than that which precedes it, and more severe than that which comes after it. Remember the death of the Prophet , peace and blessings be upon him, and your sorrow will be lessened, may Allah grant you great reward. "

Abu Bakr's Pioneering Works:

Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, was the first to embrace Islam; the first to collect the Glorious Qur'an; the first to name it Mushaf (a copy of the Qur'an); the first to be referred to with the title Khaleefah (caliph); and the first to become a caliph in the lifetime of his father.

`Aa'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, narrates that when Abu Bakr was elected caliph, he said, "My people know that my profession does not fall short of providing substance for my family. And as I will be busy serving the Muslim nation, my family will eat from the *Bayt Al-Maal* (Public Treasury), and I will practice the profession of serving the Muslims."(Reported by Al-Bukhari)

Abu Bakr: the First to Collect the Qur'an:

Abu Bakr's collection of the Qur'an is regarded by many scholars as his most significant feat. `Ali Ibn Abi Taalib, may Allah be pleased with him, is quoted to have said: "May Allah rest the soul of Abu Bakr in peace! He is worthy of being superbly rewarded on account of his collection of the Qur'an. He was the first to compile the Qur'an in a single volume."(Reported by Abu Ya`la)

It was in the battle of Yamamah (11/633) that a number of Muslims who had committed the Qur'an to memory were killed. Hence it was feared that unless a written copy of the Qur'an were prepared, a large part of the revelation might be lost. Therefore, Abu Bakr decided to compile the Qur'an in a single volume.

The following is the account in *Saheeh* Al-Bukhari: On the authority of Zayd Ibn Thaabit, may Allah be pleased with him, who says: "Abu Bakr sent for me after the (heavy) casualities among the warriors (of the battle) of Yamamah (where a great number of *Qurraa'* (those who committed the Qur'an to memory) were killed. \`Umar was present with Abu Bakr who said, "\`Umar has come to me and said, 'The Muslims suffered heavy casualties on the day of (the battle of) Yamamah, and I fear that there will be among the *Qurraa'* at other battlefields, whereby a large part of the Qur'an may be lost, unless you collect it. And I am personally of the view that you should compile the Qur'an into one volume.' Abu Bakr said, "I said to \`Umar, 'How can I do something which Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, did not do?' \`Umar said (to me), "By Allah, it is (really) a good thing."So \`Umar kept on pressing, trying to persuade me to accept his personal, till Allah made it enter my heart, and I held the same opinion as \`Umar."

Zayd Ibn Thaabit added: \`Umar was sitting with him (Abu Bakr) and was not speaking to me. Abu Bakr said, "You are a wise young man and we do not suspect you (of telling lies or of forgetfulness). You used to write down the Divine Revelation (*Wahy*) for Allah's Messenger. Therefore, look for the Qur'an and collect it (in one manuscript)." Zayd said: "By Allah, if he (Abu Bakr) had ordered me to shift one of the mountains (from its place), it would not have been harder for me than what he had commanded me concerning the collection of the Qur'an. I said to both of them, 'How dare you do a thing which the Prophet did not do?' Abu Bakr said, "By Allah, it is really a good thing. So I kept on arguing with him about it till Allah made this proposal enter my heart, as it entered the hearts of Abu Bakr and \`Umar. So I started locating Qur'anic material and collecting it from parchments, scapula, leaves of date palms and from the memories of men (who memorized it by heart). I found with Khuzaymah Ibn Thaabit two verses of *Surah*, "At-

Tawbah", which I had not found with anybody else, (and they were):

"لَقَدْ جَاءكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُم بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَؤُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ
{١٢٨} فَإِن تَوَلَّوْاْ فَقُلْ حَسْبِيَ اللّهُ لا إِلَـهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَهُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ"
(التوبة:١٢٨-١٢٩)

"Now hath come unto you a Messenger from amongst yourselves: it grieves him that you should perish: ardently anxious is he over you: to the Believers is he most kind and merciful. But if they turn away, say: "Allah sufficeth me: there is no god but He: on Him is my trust – He the Lord of the Throne (of Glory) Supreme!" (At-Tawbah: 128-129)

The manuscript on which the Qur'an was collected, remained with Abu Bakr until his death and then with `Umar till he passed away; and finally it remained with Hafsah, `Umar's daughter. (Reported by Al-Bukhari)

Hadiths Reported by Abu Bakr:

An-Nawawi states in his *Tahdheeb*: As-Sideeq reported one hundred and forty *Hadiths* of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. Though he was the Prophet's closest Companion, he reported a few number of his Sayings, because he passed away before the time people took much interest in recording and collecting *Hadiths*.

Among the people who narrated his sayings were `Umar, `Ali, Ibn `Awf, Ibn Mas`ood, Hudhayfah, Ibn `Abbaas, Anas, Zayd Ibn Thaabit, Abu Hurayrah, Abu Sa`eed Al-Khudryy, Abu Moosa Al-Ash`aryy, `Aa'ishah, and other Companions of the Prophet. Here are some of the *Hadiths* reported on his authority:

"It (sea water) is pure and its dead (animals) are lawful (i.e., they can be eaten without any prescribed slaughtering)." (Reported by Ad-Darqutni.)

"Siwaak (tooth-stick) is a purification of the mouth and a means of seeking Allah's pleasure." (Reported by Ahmad.)

"Whoever wants to read the Qur'an in the same way it was revealed should recite it like Umm `Abd (i.e., `Abdullaah Ibn Umm Maktoom)" (Reported by Ahmad.)

"I (Abu Bakr) asked the Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, to teach me a *Du`aa'* (supplication) so that I may invoke Allah with it in my *Salaah*. He told me to say, *"Allahumma inni zalamtu nafsi zulman katheeran, wala yaghfiru dhdhunuba illa anta, fa ghfir li maghfiratan min `indika, wa r-hamni, innaka anta l-ghafooru r-raheem (O Allah! I have done great injustice to myself, and none but You forgives sins, so bestow on me forgiveness from You, and have Mercy on me, for You are the All-Forgiving, the Most Merciful)."* (Reported by Al-Bukhari and Moslem.)

"If a man commits a sin, performs ablution perfectly, prays two Rak`ahs and seek Allah's Forgiveness afterwards, Allah will forgive him." (Reported by Ahmad.)

"May Allah's Curse be inflicted on the Jews and Christians who take the graves of their Prophets as places of worship." (Reported by Abu Ya`la.)

"Cursed be he who does harm to a believer or deceives him." (Reported by At-Tirmidhi.)

"Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, says, 'Our property, the chain of Prophet s, will not be inherited, and whatever we leave is to be given as Sadaqah (charity)." (Reported by Al-Bukhari.)

"Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, said: 'I have been ordered (by Allah) to fight against people till they bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and if they do so, they will gain protection from me for their lives and property, unless (they do acts that are punishable) is accordance with Islam, and their reckoning will be with Allah, the Almighty." (Reported by Al-Bukhari, Moslem and others.)

"Shirk (associating other partners with Allah) appears in a more hidden way in my nation than the creeping of ants." (Reported by Abu Ya`la and others)

"Any flesh which has grown out of unlawful earnings will not enter Paradise." And in another version, *"Hell is most fitting a flesh which has grown out of unlawful earnings."* (Reported by Abu Ya`la and others.)

"The time between two Fridays, and the Ghusl (purificataory bath) taken on Friday, are expiation for (the sins) committed in this period." (Reported by Al-`Uqayli.)

"Give glad tidings to all those who took part in the battle of Badr that they will be admitted to Paradise."(Reported by Ad-Daraqutni.)

"O Allah! Grant Islam strength through `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab." (Reported by At-Tabraani.)

"If a people give up Jihad in the Cause of Allah, Allah will smite them with humiliation." (Reported by At-Tabraani.)

"If a person builds a mosque for Allah's Sake, Allah will build him a house in Paradise." (Reported by At-Tabraani.)

*"To look at `Ali (Ibn Abi Taalib) is an act of worship."* (Reported by Ibn `Asaakir.)

Abu Bakr's Last Illness:

On the 7th of Jumadah Al-Aakherah, 13 AH - the 8th of August 634 C.E, Abu Bakr As-Siddeeq, may Allah be pleased with him, fell ill with a roaring fever. Everything was done to bring the fever down, but all was in vain. It became clear to the aged caliph that his end had come.

Even suffering on his last days and passing through the agony of death, Abu Bakr's mind was preoccupied with the future of Islam. He wanted to make sure that nothing would go wrong with the Muslim's affairs after his absence. Hence he spent every ounce of his energy neutralizing the violent storms of unrest that broke loose after the death of the Prophet , peace and blessings be upon him. He did not want this to happen after his own death.

Abu Bakr Nominates `Umar as Caliph:

The Muslims' welfare had always been Abu Bakr's priority, may Allah be pleased with him. He allowed nothing to prevail that would weaken Islam after his demise. What he feared most was division among Muslims. Knowing and fearing division between Muslims, like after the death of the Prophet , peace and blessings be upon him, he wanted to avoid a repetition of this by trying to ensure that no differences that existed would divide Muslims after his farewell. The strength of the Muslim community lay in unity, and as such it had to be preserved at any cost.

As his health deteriorated and he took a serious turn for the worse, Abu Bakr gave more and more thought to his successor. Should he himself name the best man, or should he leave the matter to be decided by the people after his death? In the latter case, quarrels might arise, since he had seen some confusion after the death of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, for the election of a caliph. These would certainly shake the very foundations of Islam. He was in an awkward position and it was a perplexing issue. Abu Bakr was not willing to take that risk, and thus he preferred to let the Muslims decide the matter in his presence.

After deep thought and thorough investigation, he nominated `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him. He summoned the *Shura* (consultation) Council in order to discuss the issue of electing the second Muslim caliph. Most of the Companions agreed with Abu Bakr's proposal, save for someone's objection on `Umar's strictness. He said, "No doubt, `Umar is the best of men, but he is rather strict." That was the only ground on which 'Ali and Talhah, may Allah be pleased with them both, did not agree with Abu Bakr on. But Abu Bakr rejected their plea on the grounds that the burden of caliphate would make him gentler.

Since there was no opposition to Abu Bakr's view, `Umar was declared the next caliph of the Muslims, and all the Companions of the Prophet, including 'Ali and Talhah, swore allegiance to him.

Although the appointment (election) of `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab did not take place in the same way as it happened with Abu Bakr, it was democratic in the sense that the nomination of `Umar took place after fair consultation with the *Shura* Council.

When all Companions agreed, Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, summoned `Uthmaan Ibn `Affaan, may Allah be pleased with him, and dictated to him `Umar's nomination. He ordered him to write: "Bismillaah-irrahmaanir-Raheem (In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful). This is the will of Abu Bakr Ibn Abi Quhaafah while he is about to leave this world and head for the next (the Hereafter), and at a time when even a non-believer starts to believe, a great sinner returns to repose faith in Allah, and even a liar starts to tell the truth. I appoint `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab as your caliph after I pass away. So listen to him and obey (his orders). I have spared no effort in doing good for the Sake of Allah, His Prophet , and for seeking the welfare of His Religion and you, and for myself. If he deals with you justly, this is what I expect from him, but if he acts otherwise, then to every man will come the punishment of the sin he earned. I am keen on bringing about welfare (to you), yet I know nothing about the unseen. And soon the wrong-doers will know what vicissitudes their affairs will take!" Then, the will was sealed, and `Uthmaan came out with `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab and Ibn Sa`eed Al-Qurazi to read out the will to the people. `Uthmaan said: "Do you agree to pledge allegiance to the one referred to in this will (i.e. `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab)?" They all replied in the affirmative, and then pledged allegiance to `Umar, may Allah be pleased with him.

After obtaining the people's approval in general terms, Abu Bakr lay on the bed, and prayed: "O Allah! I have taken this step in the best interest of the Muslims. I feared disunion among them, so I took this step, the consequences of which are best known to You. I spared no effort and exercised my personal judgment and appointed for them a man who is the best and the strongest of them, who is a very keen worker for the wellbeing of the people. O Allah, they are Your slaves; their affairs lie in Your Hands, so set right for them their affairs, and keep them on the right path. Make him (`Umar) one of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, help him follow the guidance of the Prophet of mercy (Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him), and the guidance of the righteous servants after him. (O Allah) set right for him the affair of his nation."

Abu Bakr's Advice to the New Caliph:

`Abder-Rahmaan Ibn `Abdellaah Ibn Saabit narrates: "When Abu Bakr As-Sideeq, was about to breath his last, he summoned `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, and said to him: '`Umar! Be conscious of Allah. Bear in mind that some of the duties you owe to Allah are to be carried out during the daytime, and not at night, and some of them are to be carried out at night and not during the day; and that Allah does not accept a supererogatory act till the obligatory one is performed.

Only those who stick to the truth in this world and suffer tribulations in its cause will come out successful on the Day of Judgment. And it is worthy of those who stick to the truth to find their good deeds heavy on the scales (on the Day of Judgment). And only those will be condemned on the Day of Judgement who follow falsehood in this world and show indifference to its consequences. And it is humiliating for those who follow falsehood and show indifference to its consequences to find their scales of good deeds light (on the Day of Judgment).

Allah, Exalted be He, mentions (in the Qur'an) the good deeds in the world of the people of Paradise, and that He has forgiven them their evil deeds. So if it occurs that you mention the people of Paradise, then say, 'I fear lest I would not be among them'. And Allah, Exalted be He, mentions the evil deeds of the people of Hell-Fire, and that He does not reject their good deeds. So if it occurs that you mention the people of Hell-Fire, then say, 'I hope I will not be among them'.

A person should strike a balance between hope and fear; he should fear Allah and not lose hope in His Mercy. If you follow my advice, nothing unknown will be more beloved to you than death; but if you reject it, nothing unknown will be more displeased to you than death, and you are not able to escape it."

When It Was Time to Meet His End:

Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, died in the year 13A.H. (634AC) after suffering from fever for 50 days during which he gave instructions that `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab should lead the people in *Salaah*. There is a story, which accuses the Jews of putting poison in his food, but it lacks authenticity. When he died, he was sixty three years old, and his caliphate had lasted only two years and three months. During his illness he refused to consult a doctor, and when he was asked to do so, he said that he had consulted Allah and that he was in His hands. All the time he was thinking of Islam and its future stability.

Before his death he asked how the Prophet was dressed when he was laid in his coffin. Being informed that he was dressed in three garments, Abu Bakr asked that his two old garments be used. A third new one was also bought. He disliked extravagance and stressed that the living were more important than the dead. His last words were: "O Allah! Let me die as a Muslim, and let me join the company of the righteous!"

His wife, Asmaa', and his son, `Abdur-Rahmaan, bathed him, and he was buried in `Aaishah's room, just beside the Prophet , peace and blessings be upon him. First, `Umar led the burial prayer in the mosque, then he, `Uthmaan, Talhah and `Abdur-Rahmaan supervised the burial. His head was laid just near the Prophet 's shoulders.

The inhabitants of Madeenah were deeply affected by Abu Bakr's death and were stunned by it just as they were when the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, died. `Ali Ibn Abi Taalib hastened to his house, weeping, and said: "May Allah rest your soul in peace! You were the first to accept Islam; the staunchest in belief; the closest upholder of the Prophet ; the firmest defender of Islam, and the closest in conduct to the Prophet . May Allah reward you for the efforts you did in service of Islam, the Prophet and the Muslims! You believed the Prophet when all people disbelieved him; you were generous with him when everybody else was mean; you stood by his side when others let him down; and Allah has called you the Truthful in His Book. You were a bulwark for Islam, and a thunderbolt for the unbelievers. You were never a coward, but were as steadfast as a mountain. As the Prophet said, you were weak in body but strong in faith. You were humble in soul but great in Allah's Sight. You were venerable in the world and revered among the believers. You were unprejudiced; the weak were strong before you till you redeemed them from oppression; and the strong were weak before you until they abstained from oppression. May Allah not deprive us of your blessing; nor may He let us go astray after you have departed from this life."

Thus came to an end the life of the man who could accomplish in a few years what others could not do in decades. The man who stood up bravely to an internal revolution, and valiantly opposed the two greatest empires of his time. The man who was simple in his outward appearance but great in his inward attitude. The man whose spirit was as magnificent as that of angels. Who first compiled the Qur'an, for which he deserves from all its readers, sympathetic prayers and hearty blessings.

May Allah be pleased with him
and rest his soul in peace!

عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه

`Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab

may Allah be pleased with him

"If there be a Prophet after me, that would be `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab."

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

- His Early Days
- `Umar Embraces Islam
- `Umar Migrates Despite the Disbelievers
- Hadith on the Virtues of `Umar
- The Prophet's Companions and Early Muslims Speak of `Umar
- Instances When the Divine Revelation Concorded with`Umar's View
- `Umar's Miracles The Prophet Gives `Umar the Glad Tidings That He Will Be Admitted to Paradise
- `Umar's Steadfast Faith
- `Umar's Vast Knowledge
- An Invaluable Advice from Al-Farooq (`Umar)
- `Umar Highly Revered By All
- `Umar's Insight During the Expedition of Tabook
- `Umar's Utter Devotion in Worship
- `Umar, an Example to Be Followed
- `Umar's Exemplary Generosity
- `Umar Mourns the Prophet's Death
- `Umar Pledges Allegiance to Abu Bakr
- `Umar Assumes the Caliphate
- `Umar's Memorable Speeches
- `Umar, a Matchless Caliph
- `Umar's Famous Night Patrols
- `Umar's Exemplary Justice
- `Umar's Unique Loyalty and Gratitude
- `Umar, Piety Incarnate
- `Umar's Exemplary Austerity
- `Umar's Endless Humbleness
- `Umar Follows the Example of the Prophet
- Highlights on `Umar's life
- `Umar: A Pioneering Mentality
- Events in the Life of `Umar

- `Umar's Endless Tolerance
- `Umar's Mercy on His Subjects
- `Umar: The Founder of the Muslim State
- Refuting Allegations Concerning `Umar's Deposing Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed
- Muslims Conquests in Umar s Era
- `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab Takes Over
- The Battle of Al-Yarmook
- The Battles in Iraq
- The Battle of the Bridge
- The Battle of Al-Qadissiyah
- The Conquest of Jerusalem
- The Conquest of Egypt
- The Babilion Castle
- When It Was Time to Go
- The Prophet's Companions Commend `Umar
- Among `Umar's Memorable Words

His Early Days:

Born three years after the Year of the Elephant (*`Am Al-Feel*), `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab was among the elite of the tribe of Quraysh. Whenever the flames of a feud flared between Quraysh and some other tribe, `Umar was always the tribe's ambassador, speaking in their name and retrieving their rights. Whenever tribes bragged or rivaled Quraysh, he excelled in boasting of their glories. In short, `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab was the invaluable gem Quraysh prided itself on. Before finding his way to the haven of Islam, `Umar led a life of recklessness, indulging in wine, flirting with women and delighting in overpowering his mates. An incredibly robust man of extraordinary prowess, `Umar was greatly feared and highly revered by all who knew or even heard of him. Before he became a die-hard believer, `Umar, driven by his ruthlessness and violent nature, fought the new converts callously during the early days of Islam inflicting the severest torture on them.

`Umar's Personal Appearance:

Ibn `Umar, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, was reported to have described `Umar saying: "He was a tall fair-skinned man with a touch of redness in his face, and a few gray streaks of hair." (Reported by Ibn Sa`d.)

`Umar Embraces Islam:

Ibn `Umar reports that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, once supplicated: *"O Allah, grant Islam strength through the closer and more beloved to You: `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab or Abu Jahl Ibn Hishaam."* (Reported by At-Tarmidhi.)

Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, states: "`Umar went out, sword in hand, meaning to kill the Prophet. A man from Banu Zuhrah met him on the way and asked him, ' Where are you going, `Umar ?' He answered,' I am off to kill Muhammad. Amazed and astounded, the man said, 'Do you think Banu Hishaam and Banu Zuhrah will spare your life should you do that?' ' It seems to me that you have abandoned your religion,' burst `Umar. The man retorted, 'Shall I tell you what is even more surprising? Your brother-in-law and your sister have both deserted your religion.' `Umar walked away heading for their house. Khabbabb, who was then with them, quickly hid. `Umar walked in and angrily asked,' What was that murmur I heard?' They were reading Surah Taha. They replied, 'We were only talking.' ' It seems to me that you have abandoned your faith,' `Umar roared. His brother-in-law pleaded, 'O `Umar, what if the truth lies in some other faith, not yours?' At this point, `Umar sprang upon him and dealt him a heavy blow. His sister rushed to her husband's rescue only to be severely hit causing her face to bleed. Enraged, she said, 'The truth does lie in another faith than yours. I testify that there is no god but Allah, and that Muhammad is His Messenger and Prophet.' `Umar rejoined, 'Hand me this leaf so I can read it.' `Umar was literate. His sister refused saying, ' You are unclean (on account of your idolatry) and it is a book

" لا يَمَسُّهُ إلا الْمُطَهَّرُون. " (الواقعة: ٧٩)

"Which none shall touch but those who are clean." (Al-Waqi`ah: 79) Go take a purificatory bath (Ghusl) or perform ablution. `Umar did the latter. Then, picking up the leaf, he started reading, till he came to the verse:

"إنَّنِي أنَا اللَّهُ لا إلَهَ إلا أنَا فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلاةَ لِذِكْرِي." (طه : ١٤)

"Verily, I am Allah: there is no god but I: so serve thou Me (only), and establish regular prayer for celebrating My praise." (Ta Ha: 14) `Umar asked, 'Where do I find Muhammad?' Having heard this, Khabbabb came out of his hiding and said, 'O `Umar, I hope Allah has answered the Prophet's prayer that he said on Thursday, for he supplicated, *'O Allah, grant Islam strength through the closer and more beloved to You: `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab or Abu Jahl Ibn Hishaam.'* The Prophet was in Safa, so `Umar set out to see him. At the door of the house where the Prophet was staying, `Umar was met by Hamzah, Tulha, and others. Hamzah said, 'It is `Umar. If Allah has destined him to the right path, he will embrace Islam. Otherwise, we will not hesitate to kill him.' The Prophet gave `Umar permission to come in, and he entered. The Prophet caught hold of his garb and sword-belt and said, 'O `Umar, you will not refrain (from persecuting us) until Allah inflicts on you torture and humiliation the way He did with Al-Waleed Ibn Al-Mugheerah. `Umar replied: ' I testify that there is no god but Allah and that you are Allah's Messenger and Prophet.' (Reported by Ibn Sa`d, Abu Ya`la, Al-Hakim and Al-Baihaqi.)

Similarly, Aslam reports `Umar to have said: "I used to be a merciless foe of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. It was on a sweltering day, somewhere, in Makkah that I met a man who told me, 'I cannot help but wonder at you, son of Al-Khattaab! You claim to be so and so, though this new creed has won over your own kin.' `Umar asked, ' How so?' The man rejoined, ' Your sister has embraced Islam.' Fuming with anger, I headed for her house and knocked on the door. They asked, 'Who is it?' I answered, 'It is `Umar.' They hurriedly went in to hide leaving behind a leaf they were reading. When my sister opened the door, I yelled, 'You are your own worst enemy, how could you abandon your religion?' I then hit her on the head with something I had in my hand. Her tears slowly crawled down on her face as she bled. She said, 'Do as you please, son of Al-Khattaab, for I have abandoned my old faith.' I went in and sat on the bed. I spotted the leaf and asked her to hand it to me. She said, 'You cannot hold it for you do not cleanse yourself from the major ritual impurity; and it is a book

" لا يَمَسُّهُ إلا الْمُطَهَّرُون." (الواقعة :٧٩)

"Which none shall touch but those who are clean." (Al-Waqi`ah: 79) I insisted, so she handed it to me. Unfolding it, I read, 'In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.' Having come across one of Allah's attributes, I was overcome by a feeling of dread, so I threw the leaf. But then I picked it up again and read:

"سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ." (الصف: ١)

"Whatever is in the heavens and on earth, let it declare the Praises and Glory of Allah.' (As-Saff: 1)
Again I felt dismayed, yet I read on till I encountered the verse:

"آمِنُواْ بِاللّهِ وَرَسُولِه." (النساْءْ: ١٣٦)

"Believe in Allah and His Messenger." (An-Nisaa': 136) Then, I said: 'I testify that there is no god but Allah.' Thereupon, they rushed out rejoicingly repeating, 'Allah is the Greatest.' They told me, 'We have good news for you; the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, prayed last Monday saying, *'O Allah, grant Islam strength through the closer and more beloved to You: `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab or Abu Jahl Ibn Hishaam.'* They then told me that the Prophet was in a house in Safa, so I headed there. When I knocked on their door, I heard

a voice ask, 'Who is it?' I replied, 'It is son of Al-Khattaab. They knew I was a bitter enemy of Allah's Messenger. Therefore, no one dared open the door till the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, gave them permission to do so. Two men caught me by the arm and took me to the Prophet. He said, 'Let go of him.' He then grappled with me pulling me toward himself and said, 'Embrace Islam, son of Al-Khattaab. Do guide him (to the Right Path), O Allah.' I then pronounced the profession of faith. Thereupon, all Muslims cried out of joy, 'Allah is the Greatest.' Their words echoed in all parts of Makkah.

"At that time, Muslims had not yet publicly declared their faith. I hated to watch a man being beaten and abused for embracing Islam without being made to suffer myself. I headed for my uncle, Abu Jahl Ibn Hishaam, who was among the elite of Quraysh. I knocked on his door. He asked, 'Who is it?' I replied, 'It is son of Al-Khattaab, and I have abandoned my religion.' He returned, 'Do not.' He then simply went inside and closed the door. I thought, 'That was hardly cruel.' I headed for one of Quraysh's key figures and called out his name, so he stepped out. I repeated to him exactly what I had told my uncle. He too repeated to me my uncle's very words and closed the door to my face, too. I said to myself, 'That was hardly cruel. Muslims are all abused, yet I am not.' A man asked me, 'You wish to make your embracing Islam publicly known, don't you?' I answered, 'I do.' He said, 'When people gather at the 'roofless yard', approach a particular man who hardly ever keeps a secret and secretly break to him the news that you have abandoned your faith.' So when people gathered at the roofless yard, I secretly whispered to the man, 'I have abandoned my religion.' He asked, 'Have you?' I asserted, 'Yes.' The man immediately cried at the top of his voice, 'Son of Al-Khattaab has abandoned his religion.' People rushed to me and fell to beating me and I beat them back. When a huge throng gathered, my uncle asked, 'What are all those people gathered for?' He was told, '`Umar has abandoned his religion.' He headed for the roofless yard and signaled to the people to show he had granted protection to his nephew. People then dispersed. However, I hated to see Muslims being abused, when none of this torture was ever inflicted on me. So I went to my uncle and told him that I would do without his protection. I thus went back in order to be abused and to defend myself, until Islam had the upper hand." (Reported by Al-Bazzaar, At-Tabarani, Abu Na`eem and Al-Baihaqi.)

It is reported that Ibn `Abbaas, may Allah be pleased with them both, said: "I asked `Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, 'Why did the Prophet confer upon you the title 'Al-Farooq' (the distinguisher between right and wrong)'? He answered, 'Hamzah embraced Islam three days before I did. I went to the mosque, where Abu Jahl hurled insults at the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. Having learned of that, Hamzah grabbed his bow, rushed to the mosque, and made to Quraysh's ring where Abu Jahl was seated. Hamzah leaned against his bow facing Abu Jahl. The latter looked at him and read evil in his eyes. He asked him, 'What is the matter, Abu `Imarah?' Hamzah cut with his bow one of his two jugular veins causing blood to gush out. However, Quraysh chose not to aggravate the incident lest things should get worse. `Umar said: 'The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was keeping a low profile staying at Al-Arqam's house. Hamzah set out to meet him and embraced Islam right before him. Three days later, I went out and met Al-Makhzoomyy on my way. I asked him, 'Have you abandoned your ancestors' religion and followed Muhammad 's creed?' He answered, 'If I did, so did others you have every right to hold accountable more than me.' I asked, 'Who?' He returned, 'Your sister and brother-in-law.' I rushed to their house. The door was closed, and I heard a murmur inside, so I stepped in and asked, 'What was that I have just heard?' They answered, 'You have heard nothing.' We both continued to exchange words till I struck my brother-in-law's head causing him to bleed. My sister got up, held my head and said, 'You have done this against your will.' The sight of the blood caused me to grow ashamed of myself. I sat down and said, 'Show me this leaf.' She replied: it is a book

" لا يَمَسُّهُ إِلا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ." (الواقعة : ٧٩)

"which none shall touch but those who are clean." (Al-Waqi`ah: 79) I got up and performed the purificatory bath (*Ghusl*). They handed me a leaf wherein I read, 'In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.' I said, 'These are Sacred and Divine Attributes.' I read,]

"طه. مَا أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لِتَشْقَى." (طه: ١–٢)

"Ta Ha. We have not sent down The Qur'an to thee to be (an occasion) for thy distress" (Ta Ha: 1)

"اللَّهُ لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ لَهُ الأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى." (طه: ٨)

through ***"To him belong The Most Beautiful names."*** (Ta Ha: 8) I was awe-stricken. I thought, 'This is what Quraysh fled from.' Thereupon I embraced Islam, and asked, 'Where is Allah's Messenger?' My sister answered, 'He is at Al-Arqam's.' I reached Al-Arqam's place and knocked on the door. People inside gathered, and Hamzah asked them, 'What is wrong?' They replied, 'It is `Umar.' Hamzah returned, 'Even if it is `Umar, let him in. If he embraces Islam, we will accept him. If he does not, we will kill him.' Having heard this, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, came out. At that point, `Umar pronounced the profession of faith, causing all people in the house to cry 'Allah is the Greatest,' with their words echoing throughout Makkah. I asked, 'O Prophet of Allah, is it not the truth that we believe in? The Prophet answered, 'It is.' I asked, 'Why is it that we have to hide then?' We stepped out in two lines, with Hamzah in one and myself in the other until we reached the mosque. Quraysh looked at Hamzah and me and then lapsed in such boundless grief, as they had never experienced before. Since that day the Prophet has called me 'Al-Farooq'. (i.e. the distinguisher between right and wrong.)" This is because `Umar got Islam to see the bright light of day and managed to set right and wrong apart." (Reported by Abu Na`eem and Ibn `Aasaakir.)

It is narrated that Ibn `Abbaas, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, said: "When `Umar embraced Islam, Gabriel descended on the Prophet and told him, 'O Muhammad, all the dwellers of heaven were delighted at `Umar's embracing Islam.'" (Reported by Ibn Mjah and Al-Hakim.)

Ibn `Abbaas, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, is reported to have said: "When `Umar embraced Islam, the disbelievers said, 'Only today have people (i.e. Muslims) taken vengeance on us.'" (Reported by Al-Bazzaar and Al-Hakim.) Allah also revealed His words:

"يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ حَسْبُكَ اللَّهُ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ." (الأنفال: ٦٤)

"O Prophet! Sufficient unto thee is Allah - (unto thee) and unto those who follow thee among the Believers." (Al-Anfaal: 64)

Ibn Mas`ood, may Allah be pleased with him, is reported to have said: "We have grown powerful since the day

`Umar embraced Islam." On the authority of Ibn Sa`d and At-Tabarani who reported that Ibn Mas`ood, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "`Umar's conversion to Islam was a conquest, his migration victory and his caliphate mercy. We never dared pray at the Ka`bah before `Umar embraced Islam. After that, he Umar fought them till they were forced to let us pray." (Reported by Al-Bukhari.)

Suhayb is reported to have said: "When `Umar embraced Islam, he brought this religion onto the light and publicly called on people to embrace it. Since then, we have been able to sit in rings around the Ka`bah and circumambulate it. Since then, we have managed to take vengeance on whoever was callous to us and hit back whenever the disbelievers sought to strike us." (Reported by Ibn Sa`d.)

Aslam, `Umar's bondman, is reported to have said, "(`Umar) converted to Islam in Dhul-Hijjah, 6 AH, at the age of twenty six." (Reported by Ibn Sa`d.)

`Umar Migrates Despite the Disbelievers:

`Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, reports: "Never have I known anyone to have emigrated but in secret with the exception of `Umar. When he resolved to emigrate, he took his sword, picked up his bow, grabbed some arrows and headed for the Ka`bah where the elite of Quraysh were. He performed the circumambulation, performed two *Rak`ahs* (i.e prayer units) at Abraham's Station, then stopped at each of their rings and said, 'Misshapened are the faces: let anyone who wants his mother to lose him, his son to be made an orphan and his wife to be widowed, meet me beyond that valley.' However, nobody dared take one step after him." (Reported by Ibn `Aasaakir.)

Al-Buraa', may Allah be pleased with him, is also reported to have said: "The first of the *Muhajireen* to arrive was Mus`ab Ibn `Umayr, followed by Ibn Umm Makhtoom, then `Umar Al-Khattaab accompanied by twenty others. We asked, 'What does Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, plan to do?' He answered, 'He is soon to follow.' Then Allah's Messenger and Abu Bakr later arrived."

Hadiths on the Virtues of `Umar:

Though the man's virtues are simply endless, to the point that whole volumes would not suffice to include them all, it is expedient to bring in the spotlight at least some of them.

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: *"What an excellent man Abu Bakr is, what an excellent man `Umar is..."*

Abu Sa`id Al-Khudryy reports that Allah's Messenger said: *"People of higher ranks can be seen by those beneath them the way you can detect a bright star shining in the sky. Abu Bakr and `Umar are among them. How excellent they are!"* (Reported by At-Tarmidhi.)

Abu Sa'id Al-Khudryy reports that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, said: *"While I was asleep I saw people being presented to me (in a dream) and they wore shirts and some of these reached up to their breasts and some beyond that. Then there happened to pass `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab and his shirt had been trailing." They said: "Allah's Messenger, how do you interpret this dream?" He said: "It indicates strength of faith."* (Reported by Al-Bukhari and Moslem.)

Abu Hurayrah reports that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, said: *"While I was asleep, I saw myself drawing water from my well in order to quench the thirst of the people; then Abu Bakr came to me. He took hold of the leather bucket from my hand so that he could serve water to the people. He drew two bucketfuls and there was some weakness in his drawing (may Allah forgive him). Then came Ibn Al-Khattaab and he took hold of the bucket, and I did not see a person stronger than him (drawing water) until the people went away with their thirst quenched and the bucket filled with water."* (Reported by Al-Bukhari and Moslem.)

Abu Hurayrah reports that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, said: *"There had been among the people before you Muhaddathun (i.e. inspired persons) and if there were any such among my nation `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab would be one of them."* (Reported by Al-Bukhari and Moslem.) At-Tarmidhi said that according to Ibn `Uyaynah, *Muhaddathun* means *Muffahhamun* (i.e. those endowed with Divine understanding), while in his version, Moslem adds: "Ibn Wahb explains that the word *Muhaddathun* refers to those who receive inspiration from heaven (*Mulhamun*)." This is the majority of opinions according to Ibn Hajar who points: "*Muhaddathun* means spoken to by the angels. According to Ibn Al-Atheer: *Muhaddathun* means people who are right if they rely on their guessing and intuition, so it is as if they had been informed of the right opinion. The *Hadith* also included an explanation of the word as *Mulhamun* (i.e. inspired). An inspired person is one who is informed of something and so speaks of it relying on his intuition and insight. Allah bestows this on only some of His servants such as `Umar, may Allah be pleased with him. The bottom-line is that `Umar was granted the gift of true inspiration which is the characteristic of Allah's Friends; it is called *Kashf* (unveiling).

Ibn `Umar narrates: Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, said: *"Allah has set the truth on `Umar's tongue and in his heart."* (Reported by At-Tarmidhi.) Ibn `Umar also mentions: "Whenever people encountered a certain situation concerning which their opinions varied, the Qur'an was revealed to support `Umar's." (Reported by At-Tarmidhi.)

At-Tarmidhi also reports `Uqbah Ibn `Amir to have said, "Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, said, *'If there be a Prophet after me, that would be `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab.'* "

Ibn `Umar narrates, "The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, ' *`Umar will be the "bright moon" among the residents of Paradise.'* " (Reported by Al-Bazzaar.)

Anas Ibn Malik and `Ali Ibn Abu Taalib, may Allah be pleased with them both, narrate that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, said to Abu Bakr and `Umar: *"Those two will be the chiefs of the old men in Paradise, both from old and modern times, excluding messengers and prophets... Do not tell them of that, `Ali."* (Reported by At-Tarmidhi.)

`Aa'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, is reported to have said, " Satan fears `Umar." (Reported by Ibn `Aasaakir.)

Ibn `Abbaas, may Allah be pleased with them both, narrates, "Gabriel came to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and said, 'Give `Umar Allah's greetings and tell him that his rage (when Allah is disobeyed) only boosts Islam, and his satisfaction (with something said or done) asserts that it is correct.' " (Reported by At-Tabarani.)

Ibn `Abbaas, may Allah be pleased with them both, further reports that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, *"Every angel in heaven reveres `Umar, and every devil on earth fears him."* (Reported by Ibn `Aasaakir.)

Al-Fadl, Ibn `Abbaas reports that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, *"After my decease, the truth shall be with `Umar wherever he may be."* (Reported by At-Tabarani and Ad-Delmeyy.)

Abu Sa`id Al-Khudryy reports that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, said, *"Whoever hates `Umar, hates me and whoever loves `Umar, loves me. Allah boasts of people on the eve of `Arafaat in general and of `Umar in particular. Whenever Allah sent a prophet to a nation, he had a spokesman among his people. If there is one among my nation, he is `Umar." He was asked, "Who is a spokesman, Allah's Messenger? He answered, "He is the mouthpiece of the angels."* (Reported by At-Tabarani.)

It is reported that the Prophet, peace and blessings the upon him, saw `Umar dressed in a garment (in another narration, a white raiment), so he asked him, *"Is your garment new or washed?" `Umar answered, "It is washed." The Prophet returned, "Wear new clothes, live praised (by people) all your life, and die as a martyr."* (Reported by Ahmad and `Abdur-Raziq.)

Anas Ibn Malik narrates: "The Prophet ascended the mountain of Uhud accompanied by Abu Bakr, `Umar and `Uthmaan. The mountain shook beneath them. The Prophet hit it with his foot and said, *'O Uhud ! Be firm, for on you there is none but a Prophet, a Siddeeq and a martyr (i.e. and two martyrs).'* " (Reported by Al-Bukhari, Abu Dawood and At-Tarmidhi.)

Abu Hurayrah recounts that the Prophet said, "While a man was riding a cow, it turned and said to him, *'I have not been created for this purpose (i.e. carrying loads), I have been created for ploughing.' " The Prophet added, "I, Abu Bakr and `Umar believe the story." The Prophet went on, "A wolf caught a sheep, and when the shepherd chased it, the wolf said, 'Who will be its guard on the day of wild beasts, when there will be no shepherd for it except me?' " Having narrated the story, the Prophet said, "I, Abu Bakr and `Umar too believe it." Abu Salama (a sub-narrator) said, "Abu Bakr and `Umar were not present then."* (Reported by Ahmad, Al-Bukhari, Moslem and An-Nasaa'i.)

Ibn `Umar, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, reports that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: *"The most merciful of my nation to my nation is Abu Bakr and the firmest in Abiding by Allah's commands is `Umar..."* (Reported by Ahmad, At-Tarmidhi and An-Nasaa'i.)

`Umar was second to none but Abu Bakr in closeness to and approval from the Prophet. He, peace and blessings be upon him, said: *"I have two inhabitants from the inhabitants of heaven and two ministers from the inhabitants of earth. The former are Jibreel (Gabriel) and Mika'eel, and the latter are Abu Bakr and `Umar."* It is related that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: *"Those two are like my ears and eyes;"* he meant Abu Bakr and `Umar. (Reported by At-Tarmidhi and Al-Hakim.)

The Prophet also said, *"I do not know how much longer I shall live. So follow those who will outlive me: Abu Bakr and `Umar."* (Reported by At-Tarmidhi.)

The Prophet's Companions and Early Muslims Speak of `Umar:

Abu Bakr As-Sideeq, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "No man is dearer to me than `Umar." (Reported by Ibn `Aasaakir.)

Having fallen ill, Abu Bakr was asked, "What would you say to Allah, having appointed `Umar as your successor?" He answered, "I would say, I appointed the very best of the people as their ruler." (Reported by Ibn Sa`d.)

`Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "If we are to mention the righteous, `Umar is surely first on the list. There was never any doubt that he was the voice of wisdom." (Reported by At-Tabarani.)

Ibn `Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "Ever since the demise of Allah's Messenger, I have not seen anyone firmer in faith or more generous than `Umar." (Reported by Ibn Sa`d.)

Ibn Mas`ood, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "If `Umar's knowledge was placed in one of the scales of the balance and the knowledge of all the people in the other, his would outweigh theirs. He was believed to possess nine tenths of knowledge." (Reported by At-Tabarani and Al-Hakim.)

Hudhayfah mentions, "Never have I known a man to fear no one in Abiding by Allah's laws except `Umar."

Mu`awiyah, may Allah be pleased with him, states, "Life offered Abu Bakr no temptations and he never sought worldly pleasures either, whereas life did offer `Umar temptations, yet he never yielded to them. We, on the other hand, have been soaked in worldly temptations." (Reported by Az-Zubayr Ibn Bakkaar.)

Ibn Mas`ood, may Allah be pleased with him, said, " `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab outdid people in four things; when he thought the captives of the Badr battle should be killed, then Allah revealed His words:

" لَوْلَا كِتَابٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ سَبَقَ " (الأنفال: ٦٨)

"Had it not been for a previous ordainment from Allah" (Al-Anfaal: 68) Concerning the veil, he ordered the Prophet's wives to stay in their houses. So Zaynab told him, 'O Ibn Al-Khattaab, would you force us to obey your orders when Allah's revelation comes down in our homes?' Then Allah revealed the following verse:

" وَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ مَتَاعًا" (الأحزاب: ٥٣)

"And when ye ask (his ladies) for anything ye want," (Al-Ahzab: 53)

Thirdly, he did when the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, prayed, *"O Allah, strengthen Islam with `Umar."* Finally, `Umar outdid people on account of his opinion of Abu Bakr, for he was the first to pledge allegiance to him." (Reported by Ahamd, Al-Bazzaar and At-Tabarani.)

Mujahid reports: "We were told that the devils were shackled during `Umar's caliphate. They were not released until he was stabbed."

Instances When the Divine Revelation Concorded with `Umar's View:

Those instances are generally believed to amount to twenty. Mujahid states: "`Umar's views were confirmed by the Qur'an." Ibn `Umar is reported to have said, "Whenever people held a certain view about something and `Umar held another, the Qur'an was revealed to confirm his view."

`Umar is narrated to have said: "My Lord agreed with me in three things: Firstly, I said, 'O Allah's Messenger, I wish we took the Station of Abraham as our praying place (for some of our prayers).' So came the Divine Inspiration:

" وَاتَّخِذُواْ مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى" (البقرة: ١٢٥)

"And take ye the Station of Abraham as a place of prayer." (Al-Baqarah: 125)

Secondly, as regards the verse of the veiling of women, I said, 'O Allah's Messenger! I wish you ordered your wives to cover themselves from men because good and bad people talk to them.' So the verse of the veiling of women was revealed. Thirdly, once the Prophet's wives united against him, I told them:

"عَسَى رَبُّهُ إِن طَلَّقَكُنَّ أَن يُبْدِلَهُ أَزْوَاجًا خَيْرًا مِّنكُنَّ." (التحريم: ٥)

"It may be, if he divorced you (all), that Allah will give him in exchange Consorts better than you," So this verse (the same as I had said) was revealed." (At-Tahreem: 5). (Reported by Al Bukhari and Moslem in their two authentic books.)

Similarly, Ibn `Umar, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, reports that `Umar said: "My Lord concorded with (my judgments) on three occasions. In the case of the Station of Abraham, in the case of the observance of the veil and in the case of the captives of Badr." (Reported by Moslem.) This *Hadith* therefore reveals a fourth instance.

According to An- Nawawi's *At-Tahdheeb*, the Qur'an confirmed `Umar's opinion concerning the captives of Badr, the veil, Abraham's Station, and the prohibition of wine. We hence learn of a fifth incident. `Umar is reported to have said, "O Allah, show us an indisputable evidence concerning wine." Allah thereupon prohibited it.

As for the sixth incident, Anas reports: " `Umar said, 'Allah's revelation concorded with my view as regards four things: when the following verse was revealed:

" وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الإنسَانَ مِن سُلالَةٍ مِّن طِينٍ." (المؤمنون: ١٢)

"Man We did create from a quintessence (of clay)" (Al-Mu'minun: 12) I said, 'So blessed be Allah, the Best to create! So Allah revealed:

" فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ." (المؤمنون: ١٤)

"So blessed be Allah, the Best to create!" (Al-Mu'minun: 14) (Reported by Ibn Abu Hatim.)

Seventhly, `Umar stated: "When `Abdullaah Ibn 'Ubayy died, the Prophet was called to lead the prayer at his funeral. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, got up. I stood up right in front of him to stop him, saying, 'O Allah's Messenger, will you pray at the funeral of Allah's enemy, Ibn 'Ubayy, who once said so and so?' I swear that it was only shortly afterwards that Allah sent down His words:

"وَلَئِن سَأَلْتَهُم لَيَقُولُنَّ إِنَّمَا كُنَّا نَخُوضُ وَنَلْعَبُ قُلْ أَبِاللَّهِ وَآيَاتِهِ وَرَسُولِهِ كُنتُمْ تَسْتَهْزِؤُون."

(التوبة: ٨٤)

"Nor do thou ever pray for any of them that dies." (At-Tawbah: 84)"

`Umar's Miracles:

Ibn `Umar, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, is reported to have said: "`Umar sent out an army, at the helm of which was a man called Saariyah. While `Umar was delivering a sermon, he called out three times, 'O Saariyah, seek the protection of the mount!' When the messenger of the army arrived, `Umar asked him about the battle. The messenger answered: 'O Commander of the faithful, we were about to be defeated. At that point, we heard a voice call out three times, 'O Saariyah, seek the protection of the mount!' So we assumed our positions in front of the mountain and Allah granted us victory. `Umar was told, 'You really did cry so, though the mountain Saariyah was stationed by was at Nahawand, in the land of non-Muslims.'" (Reported by Al-Baihaqi and Abu Na`eem.)

Ibn `Umar, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, further reports: "`Umar was delivering the Friday sermon, when he interrupted it saying: 'O Saariyah, seek the protection of the mount. If you are to ask the wolf to be your shepherd, you are at fault.' People looked at each other in astonishment. `Ali told them: 'Wait till he explains to you.' When `Umar finished the sermon, he was asked about his digression. He said, It occurred to me that the disbelievers have defeated our army who were then by a mountain. Should they use it to cover their backs, they would fight in only one direction. Otherwise, they would be conquered. That is why I uttered the words you claim to have heard. The messenger of the army arrived a month later and mentioned that they had heard `Umar's voice that day, sought the protection of the mountain and were indeed victorious." (Reported by Ibn Mardaweih.)

Ibn`Umar, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, also mentions: "`Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab asked a man, 'What is your name?' The man answered, 'Jamrah (glowing embers)'. `Umar asked, 'Son of whom?' The man said, 'Son of Shihab (a falling star).' `Umar again asked, 'Where are you from?' He replied, 'From Al-Hurqah (the burning fire).' `Umar asked, 'Where do you live?' The man returned, 'In Al-Harah (the heat).' He asked, 'Where is it located?' The man answered, 'In That-Ludhah (the flames).' `Umar then told him, 'Rush to your people's rescue for they are on fire.' The man hurried back only to find his family burned." (Reported by Abu Al-Qasim Ibn Bashraan.)

Moreover, it is reported that after the conquest of Egypt, its people went to meet `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas right upon his arrival. They said: "O Emir, the River Nile will not flow unless we observe a certain custom." Ibn Al-`Aas asked, "What custom is that ?" They answered: "On the 11th night of this current month, we select a virgin still living with her parents, handsomely reward the latter, then dress and adorn the girl as richly as we can and throw her in the Nile." `Amr replied: "This certainly does not go in line with Islam, which wipes out whatever acts of ignorance that existed before its advent." For a while, the Nile continued to flow neither abundantly nor insufficiently, till Muslim troops planned to leave. Consequently, `Amr wrote to `Umar to inform him of the situation. `Umar replied that `Amr said the right thing and that Islam does wipe out acts of ignorance that existed before its advent. `Umar informed `Amr that he was sending him a card enclosed with his message and that he was to throw it in the Nile. When `Amr received the message, he opened the card, which read: "From Allah's humble servant, `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, the Commander of the Faithful, to Egypt's River Nile, if you flow on your own, do not continue flowing. Yet, if you flow according to Allah's Will, I pray to Allah, the One, the Conqueror, to cause you to flow." The card was thrown in the Nile a day before observing the Egyptian pagan custom. The next morning people woke up to find how Allah, Exalted be He, caused it to flow for a distance of 16 cubits overnight. Since then, the people of Egypt have abandoned their hateful custom indefinitely. (Reported by Al-Hafiz Ibn Katheer.)

Tariq Ibn Shuraih states: When a man spoke to `Umar and lied, `Umar would say, "Take this back." The man would lie again and again `Umar would say, "Take this back." The man would then admit, "Everything I told you is the truth except what you told me to take back." (Reported by Ibn `Aasaakir.)

The Prophet Gives `Umar the Glad Tidings That He Will Be Admitted to Paradise:

Our beloved Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, broke to `Umar the good news that he will be among the dwellers of Paradise. The Prophet even saw `Umar's palace in heaven.

Ibn Mas`ood, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "I heard the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, say: *'A man from among the dwellers of Paradise will now pass along,' Abu Bakr passed by. The Prophet then said: 'Another of the dwellers of Paradise will now pass along,' and `Umar passed by.*" (Reported by At-Tarmidhi and Al-Hakim.)

`Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn `Awf, may Allah be pleased with him, states: I heard Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, say: *"Abu Bakr will be admitted to Paradise, so will `Umar, so will `Uthmaan, so will `Ali, so will Talhah, so will Azubair, so will Abdur-Rahman Ibn `Awf, so will Sa`d Ibn Abu Waqqaas, so will Sa`id Ibn Zaid, so will Abu `Ubaid Ibn Al-*

Jarah." (Reported by At-Tarmidhi.)

Anas Ibn Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, narrates: "The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: *'I walked into Paradise and saw a gold palace. I asked, who does it belong to? They replied, To a man from Quraysh. I thought that was me. I asked, who is he? They replied, `Umar.'* " (Reported by At-Tarmidhi, Ahmad and Ibn Habban.)

Abu Hurayrah narrates: "While we were in the company of the Prophet, he said, *'While I was asleep, I saw myself in Paradise and there I beheld a woman performing ablution beside a palace, I asked, To whom does this palace belong? They said, To `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab. Then I remembered `Umar's Ghayrah (i.e. jealousy over women), and so I hurried away from that palace.'* " (When `Umar heard this from the Prophet), he wept and said, "Do you think it is likely that I would have feelings of *Ghayrah* because of you, O Allah's Messenger?" (Reported by Al-Bukhari and Moslem.)

`Umar's Steadfast Faith:

`Abdullaah Ibn Hishaam narrates: "We were with the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, while he was walking with `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab arm in arm. `Umar said to the Prophet: 'O Allah's Messenger, you are dearer to me than everyone and everything except myself.' The Prophet answered: *'No, by Him in Whose Hands my life is, I should be dearer to you than yourself.'* `Umar then returned: 'I swear by Allah, you are dearer to me than myself now.' The Prophet thereupon said: *'Now I am, `Umar.'* " (Reported by Al-Bukhari and Ahmad.)

Among `Umar's invaluable words were the following: "Whenever one's sense of shame diminishes, one's piety does, too, and whenever one's piety diminishes, one's heart becomes dead."

Abu Sa`id Al-Khudryy reports Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, as saying: *"While I was asleep I saw people being presented to me (in a dream) and they wore shirts, some of which were merely covering their chests, and some were a bit longer. `Umar was presented before me and his shirt was so long that he was dragging it." They asked, "How do you interpret it, Allah's Messenger?" He said, "It is a symbol of faith."*(Reported by Al-Bukhari, Moslem and At-Tarmidhi.)

`Umar's Vast Knowledge:

Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, is reported to have said: *"While I was asleep, I saw (in a dream) a cup containing milk being presented to me. I took some sips until I perceived freshness being reflected through my nails. Then I handed the milk to `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab. They said: Allah's Messenger: How do you interpret it? He said: This implies knowledge."* (Reported by Al-Bukhari, Moslem and At-Tarmidhi.)

In his *Fathul Bari*, Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar explains that "knowledge" here refers to the Ability to rule people according to the Glorious Qur'an and Prophetic Tradition. `Umar exclusively enjoyed this kind of knowledge which was manifested in his long caliphate which lasted for a period of ten years, in contrast to Abu Bakr who ruled for only two years. Also, throughout `Umar's reign, the entire nation was under his authority. Conversely, during `Uthmaan's rule, people divided over many issues and opinions varied, which resulted in widespread sedition. That is why `Umar's knowledge was matchless in the Islamic history.

\`Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab narrates: "A Jew one day said to me, "O Commander of the Faithful! There is a verse in your Holy Book which is read by all of you (Muslims), and had it been revealed to us, we would have taken that day (on which it was revealed) as a day of celebration." \`Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab asked, "Which verse is that ?" The Jew replied:

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الإِسْلامَ دِينًا."
(المائدة: ٣)

"This day have I perfected your religion For you, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion." (Al-Ma'idah: 3)

\`Umar replied, "No doubt, we know when and where this verse was revealed unto the Prophet. It was on Friday, the day the Prophet was standing on \`Arafaat (i.e. the Day of Hajj)." (Reported by Al-Bukhari and Moslem.)

An Invaluable Advice from Al-Farooq (\`Umar):

\`Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "Seek knowledge before you come to assume leading posts."

In his *Al-Fatih*, Al-Hafiz explains: \`Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, meant that being in a position of authority might prevent one from learning more about Islam, as a chief might be too proud to join circles of students. That is why Malik spoke of the disadvantages of being appointed as a judge saying: Whenever a judge is deposed, he never goes back to the circle where he used to learn.

Qubaysah Ibn Jabir states: "I swear by Allah, never have

I known anyone more merciful to his subjects than Abu Bakr, nor anyone who read Allah's Book more, who knew more about Islam, who Abided more strictly to Allah's limits and who was more feared by men than `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, nor have I ever known anyone who was shyer than `Uthmaan Ibn `Affaan." (Reported by Ibnul Atheer.)

`Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn `Abdul-Qari' narrates: "I headed with `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him, for the mosque one night in Ramadan. We found a disunited host of people; one man praying on his own, and a group of men praying behind an Imam. `Umar said: 'I believe if we unite all this host behind a single *Imam*, it will be better.' He then made up his mind and united them behind 'Ubayy Ibn Ka`b. When we headed there another night, we found Muslims led by a single *Imam* in prayer. `Umar said: 'Quite a good innovation this is! Yet, the part of the night they sleep is better than that in which they pray – e eant the latter part of the night, as people used to pray during the earlier part.' " (Reported by Al-Bukhari.)

`Abdullaah Ibn Mas`ood, may Allah the pleased with him, states: "I believe all people were grieved when `Umar was stabbed except people of malevolence. `Umar was more Allah-conscious than any of us, read the Qur'an more than any of us and was more versed in Islam than any of us."

`Umar Highly Revered By All:

At-Tarmidhi reports that the Prophet, peace and blessings the upon him, said, *"I see Satanic jinns and the people flee from `Umar."*

Sudaysah reports that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, *"Wherever Satan encountered `Umar since* *the latter embraced Islam, he fell on his face."*

Sa`d Ibn Abu Waqqaas reports that `Umar sought permission from Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, to visit him while some women of Quraysh were there talking to him and raising their voices above his. When `Umar asked for permission to come in, they got up and hurriedly hid behind the curtain. Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, gave him permission smilingly. Thereupon `Umar said: "Allah's Messenger, may Allah keep you happy all your life." Then the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "I wonder at those women who were just with me; no sooner did they hear your voice than they immediately hid behind the curtain!" Thereupon `Umar said: "O Allah's Messenger, they ought to fear you more." Then `Umar, addressing the women, said: "O you enemies of yourselves, do you fear me and fear not the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him?" They answered: "Yes, you are harsh and strict as compared to Allah's Messenger." Thereupon, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: *"By Him, in Whose Hand is my life, if Satan would encounter you in the way, he would certainly take a different way from that of yours."* (Reported by Al-Bukhari and Moslem.)

`Aa'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, said: "I brought the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, some *Khazirah* (boiled pieces of meat to which flour is added). I told Sawdah, while the Prophet was seated between the two of us, 'Have some.' She refused my offer. I said: 'Either you eat or I will smear your face with it.' Yet she still refused it. So, I dipped my hand in the *Khazirah* and stained her face. The Prophet laughed and said to Sawdah, 'Stain her face as well.' The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, laughed. `Umar passed by and called out, 'O Allah's slave, O Allah's slave!' The Prophet thought he was going to come in, so he said, 'Get up and wash your faces.' `Aa'ishah said, I have always feared `Umar as Allah's Messenger revered him." (Reported by Abu Ya`la.)

Ibn `Abbaas narrates: "For a whole year I had a desire to ask `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab about the explanation of a verse (in *Surat* At-Tahrim) but I could not ask him because I revered him very much. When he went to perform the Hajj, I too went along with him. On our trip back home, `Umar stepped aside to answer the call of nature by the 'Arak' trees. I waited till he finished, and then we proceeded. I then asked him: 'O Commander of the Faithful, who were the two wives of the Prophet's who aided one another against him?' He said, 'They were Hafsah and `Aa'ishah.' Then I said to him, 'By Allah, I have wanted to ask you about this for a year, but I could not, out of my extreme respect for you." `Umar said, 'Do not refrain from asking me. If you think that I have knowledge (about a certain matter), ask me; and if I know (the answer), I will tell you.' " (Reported by Al-Bukhari.)

Umar's Insight During the Expedition of Tabook:

Abu Hurayrah narrates: "We accompanied the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, in an expedition (towards Tabook). People's provisions were almost depleted, and the situation became so critical that they (the men of the army) decided to slaughter some of their camels. Upon this `Umar said: Messenger of Allah, I wish you would pool together what has been left of the provisions with the people and then invoke the blessings of Allah upon them. He (the Prophet) did that accordingly. Each, hence, fetched whatever provisions he had left with him. The Prophet invoked the blessings (of Allah) upon them (the provisions). There was such a miraculous increase in the stocks that people replenished their provisions fully. At that point, the Prophet said: *'I testify that there is no god but Allah, and that I am His Messenger. Whoever of Allah's servants meets Him without entertaining any doubt about these (two fundamentals) would surely be admitted to Paradise.'* " (Reported by Al-Bukhari.)

`Umar's Utter Devotion in Worship:

Despite the fact that `Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, had to shoulder the burden of an entire nation, never did he forget for a second about his worship, which he regarded as the indispensable provision along his journey to Allah, Exalted be He.

Abu Qatadah narrates that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, asked Abu Bakr: "When do you observe the *Witr* (i.e. the bedtime prayer) ?" He replied: "I observe the *Witr* prayer in the early hours of the night." The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, asked `Umar: "When do you observe the Witr?" He replied: "During the late hours of the night." He then said to Abu Bakr: "You are careful about it"; and he said to `Umar: "You have performed it with vitality." (Reported by Abu Dawood.)

Aslam mentions that `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him, used to stay up late praying for as long as he wished, but in the latter part of the night, he would call out on his household urgingly, "Rise to pray! Rise to pray!" He would then recite the following verse:

"وَأْمُرْ أَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَاصْطَبِرْ عَلَيْهَا." (طه: ١٣٢)

"Enjoin prayer on thy people, and be constant therein." (Ta Ha: 132) (Reported by Abu Dawood, Malik and Al-Baihaqi.)

Zayd Ibn Haydar, may Allah rest his soul in peace, states: `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab used to fast and use the *Siwak* (i.e. a tooth stick) more than anyone else. (Reported by Ibn Sa`d.)

Ibn `Umar, may Allah be pleased with them both, mentions: `Umar died having observed the fast his whole life.

Al-Husayn narrates: `Uthmaan Ibn Abu Al-`Aas married one of `Umar Al-Khattaab's widows and said: "I swear by Allah it is not because I am interested in money or offspring that I have married her, but because I would like her to tell me how `Umar used to spend his nights." (Reported by At-Tabarani.)

Al-Hafiz Ibn Katheer speaks of `Umar's nights saying: `Umar would lead people in the *`Isha'* (night) prayer, then go home and continue to pray till dawn.

`Umar once said to Mu`awiyah Ibn Khudryy: "Should I sleep in the morning, I would ruin my subjects and should I sleep at night, I would ruin myself. How will I ever get to sleep with those two burdens resting on my shoulders, Mu`awiyah?" (Reported by Ahamd.)

`Umar, an Example to Be Followed:

Upon being handed the Black Stone (*Al-Hajar Al-Aswad*), `Umar said: "I surely know that you are merely a stone incapable of inflicting harm or bringing good. Had I not seen Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, kiss you, I would never have done so."

In his *Al-Fatih*, Al-Hafiz quotes At-Tabari as saying: The reason why `Umar said that was because people had only recently abandoned idolatry. So he was worried some people might think that being handed the Black Stone was a token of glorification of some stones, as used to be the custom in the Pre-Islamic era. Hence, `Umar meant people to understand that he was only following the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, in so doing.

Al-Hafiz, may Allah rest his soul in peace, then proceeds : `Umar's words reveal his total submission to the Lord, as well as his close adherence to Islamic rules, whose wisdom has not been revealed. He also illustrates the golden rule of following the Prophet in whatever he does, even if the significance of it is not clear. (Reported in *Fathul-Bari*.)

Nafi` reports: People used to head for the tree under which the Prophet conducted the Pledge of Satisfaction to pray there. When `Umar learned of that, he ordered it to be cut down.

Al-Ma`roor narrates: "We accompanied `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him, on one of his pilgrimages. He read the *Surahs* 'the Elephant' (*Al-Feel*) and 'Quraysh' in the *Fajr* (dawn) prayer. When he left, people encountered a mosque and immediately hurried to it. `Umar asked: 'What mosque is this?' They answered: 'The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, prayed in this mosque.' `Umar returned: 'This was exactly what caused the destruction of the People of the Book prior to you. They held their Prophets' monuments as sacred places of worship. Whoever has yet to perform prayer may pray, whoever has already done so should leave.' "

It is related that a man then came to meet `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him and said: "O Commander of the Faithful, when we conquered Al-Madaa'in, I came across a book wherein I read wondrous words." `Umar asked, "Are they from the Qur'an?" The man replied, "No." `Umar thereupon asked for his *Dirah* (stick) to be fetched and he fell to beating the man. He then read out Allah's words:

"الر تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِين. إِنَّا أَنزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ. نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْـكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ هَـذَا الْقُرْآنَ وَإِن كُنتَ مِن قَبْلِـهِ لَمِـنَ الْغَـافِلِينَ."

(يوسف: ١–٣)

"A. L. R these are the symbols (or verses) of the perspicuous book. We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an, in order that ye may learn wisdom." till ***"before this, thou too was among those who knew it not."*** (Yusuf: 1-3) `Umar next said: "What brought about the downfall of nations prior to you was their turning to the books of their scholars and priests, leaving behind the Torah and the Bible, till they decayed, and the knowledge they encompassed was gone." (Reported by Ibn Al-Jawjeyy.)

`Umar's Exemplary Generosity:

A staunch believer who is confident of Allah's Promise knows, beyond all doubt, that He, the Almighty , is the Sole Bestower. That is why he readily spends all he has for the sake of the welfare of his fellow Muslims as he realizes that Allah will compensate him for all he gives away. Al-Farooq (`Umar), may Allah be pleased with him, set an example in graciousness and generosity for the entire nation.

It is reported that `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab said: "Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded us to give out charity (*Sadaqah*) and I was in possession of some wealth then. I thought: 'Today I will outdo Abu Bakr.' So I brought half of my wealth. Allah's Messenger asked me, 'What have you left for your family?' I answered, 'Just as much (as I have given out).' Abu Bakr brought all the wealth he possessed. The Prophet asked him, 'What have you left for your family?' He replied, 'Allah and His Messenger.' I thought, 'There is no way I can outdo him in anything.' " `Umar meant by that he can never outdo Abu Bakr in any of the virtues, because if he could not outdo him although the former had plenty of money, whereas the latter had little, there was not much chance `Umar could outdo him in a different situation.

Al-A`mash states: I was once at `Umar's. He brought twenty two thousand *Dirhams* and did not leave till he had given them all away. Whenever he liked any of the things he owned, he gave it away. `Umar frequently gave away sugar. When he was asked why he did, he answered: "Because I love it and Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"لَن تَنَالُواْ الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنفِقُواْ مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ وَمَا تُنفِقُواْ مِن شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ اللّهَ بِهِ عَلِيـــمٌ." (ال عمران: ١٩٢)

"By no means shall ye attain righteousness unless ye give (freely) of that which ye love." (Ali-`Imraan: 92)"

Mujahid states: `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab once wrote to Abu Moosa Al-Ash`aryy asking him to buy him a bondwoman from the captives of the Galoula' battle. Abu Musa did. So, `Umar called her and set her free then recited Allah's verse:

"لَن تَنَالُواْ الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنفِقُواْ مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ وَمَا تُنفِقُواْ مِن شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ اللّهَ بِـــهِ عَلِيـــمٌ." (ال عمران: ١٩٢)

"By no means shall ye attain righteousness unless ye give

(freely) of that which ye love."

Aslam narrates: "Ibn `Umar asked me about some matters concerning `Umar. He said: 'Since Allah's Messenger died, I have never seen anybody more serious, hard working and generous than `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab (till the end of his life)." (Reported by Al-Bukhari.)

In *Al-Fath*, Al-Hafiz explains: No one was firmer in handling matters, or more generous in giving away money, than `Umar. This applies to a specific period of time, namely, the time of his caliphate, so as to exclude the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him and Abu Bakr from that.

`Umar Mourns the Prophet's Death:

Anas narrates: "When the ailment of the Prophet aggravated, he became unconscious, whereupon Faatimah said, 'Oh, how distressed my father is!' `Umar said, 'Your father will have no more distress after today.' When he passed away, she said, 'O Father! Who has responded to the call of the Lord Who has invited him! O Father, whose dwelling place is the Garden of Paradise (i.e. *Al-Firdaus*)! O Father! We convey this news (of your death) to Gabriel.' When he was buried, Faatimah said, 'O Anas! Do you feel pleased to throw earth over Allah's Messenger?' " (Reported by Al-Bukhari and Ahmad.)

Al-Hafiz Ibn Rajab, may Allah rest his soul in peace, points: When the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, passed away, Muslims were bewildered. Some were astounded and overtaken by confusion. Some felt paralyzed, and could not get up. Others were dumbfounded and could not utter a word. Others yet totally denied his death, and insisted that the Prophet was summoned by Allah. (*Lata'if Al-Ma`aarif*: p. 113-4)

As for `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, he cried out: "Some hypocrites claim that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, died. He did not die: he rather went to Allah the way Moses, son of `Imraan, did. He stayed away from his people and came back forty nights later, after they claimed he had died. I swear by Allah the Prophet shall be back and will cut the hands and feet of those who claim he is dead." (Reported by Ibn Hishaam)

Abu Bakr came riding his horse from his dwelling place in As-Sunh. He dismounted it, entered the mosque and did not speak with anybody till he came to Faatimah and went directly to the Prophet, who was covered with a marked blanket. Abu Bakr uncovered his face. He knelt down and kissed him and then started weeping and said: "My father and my mother be sacrificed for you, O Allah's Prophet! Allah will not combine two deaths on you. You have died the death you were destined for." Abu Bakr came out while `Umar was addressing the people. Abu Bakr told him to sit down but `Umar refused. Abu Bakr again told him to sit down, and `Umar again refused. People gathered around Abu Bakr leaving `Umar behind. Abu Bakr started off saying: "Let whoever worshipped Muhammad know that Muhammad is dead, and let whoever worshipped Allah know that Allah is immortal." Allah says:

" وَمَا مُحَمَّد إِلاَّ رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِن قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَإِن مَّاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انقَلَبْتُـــمْ عَلَـــى
أَعْقَابِكُمْ وَمَن يَنقَلِبْ عَلَىَ عَقِبَيْهِ فَلَن يَضُرَّ اللّهَ شَيْئًا وَسَيَجْزِي اللّهُ الشَّـاكِرِينَ. " (ا ل
عمران: ١٤٤)

"Muhammad is no more than a Messenger: many were the Messengers that passed away before him. If he died or were slain, will ye then turn back on your heels? If any did turn

back on his heels, not the least harm will he do to Allah; but Allah (on the other hand) will swiftly reward those who (serve him) with gratitude." (Ali-`Imraan: 144)

"By Allah, it was as if people never knew that Allah had revealed this verse before, till Abu Bakr heard it and they received it from him, and I heard everybody recite it (then)." Az-Zuhri narrates: Sa`eed Ibn Al-Musayyib told me that `Umar said, "By Allah, when I heard Abu Bakr recite it, my legs could not support me and I fell down at the very moment of hearing him, declaring that the Prophet had died." (Reported by Al-Bukhari.)

`Umar Pledges Allegiance to Abu Bakr:

Anas Ibn Malik reports that he heard `Umar's sermon when he sat on the pulpit the day after the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, died. `Umar started by pronouncing the profession of faith while Abu Bakr was silent. `Umar proceeded: "How I wish Allah's Messenger had outlived us all. However, if Muhammad is dead, Allah has left among us some of the light with which the Prophet was guided. I mean Abu Bakr, the Prophet's companion, and the second of that pair. He is the most eligible person to handle your affairs, so get up and pledge allegiance to him." A group of Muslims had already done so at the shed of Bani Sa`dah. People's public pledge of allegiance was given at the pulpit. Anas proceeds: "I heard `Umar tell Abu Bakr that day: 'Go up the pulpit.' `Umar insisted till Abu Bakr complied then all the people pledged allegiance to him." (Reported by Al-Bukhari.)

`Umar Assumes the Caliphate:

Abu Bakr As-Sideeq, Muslim's first Caliph, may Allah be pleased with him, died on Monday 22nd Jumadi Al-Akherah

13 AH, after a fifteen day illness during which `Umar led Muslims in *Salat*. While bedridden, Abu Bakr nominated `Umar for the caliphate after his decease. During the life of the Prophet's successor, `Umar, driven by his usual firmness as well as indisputable sensibility and far-sightedness, always readily offered sound advice and enlightening counsel. His strictness coupled with Abu Bakr's lenience presented a magnificent model of government at a critical time when Islam was preparing to spread its wings and soar high above to beam down on the entire globe. Abu Bakr saw in `Umar the ideal man to succeed him. He therefore had `Uthmaan Ibn `Affaan write down this nomination which was read out loud publicly, whereupon Muslims declared their acceptance and obedience.

It was therefore in the year 13 AH that `Umar became Muslims' second Caliph or *Amirul Mu'mineen* (i.e. the Commander of the Faithful) as he was later called. Their reason behind that title is that when the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, passed away and Abu Bakr was in charge of Muslims' affairs, he was constantly called, "the successor of Allah's Messenger". Similarly, when Abu Bakr passed away and `Umar assumed his office, people started calling him, "the successor of the successor of Allah's Messenger". It was hence obvious that this system could not continue and that the need for an appropriate title was definite. `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab was therefore the first to be given the title of *Amirul Mu'mineen*, which was then passed on to a long line of caliphs, who nonetheless never came close to being equals to `Umar, but who were in charge of the affairs of Muslims in a continually expanding state.

`Umar's sermon and speeches encompass the best lessons to be taught by our contemporary rulers and light the way for those who have been derailed. His words should prey on their consciences and his acts should strike an example to be followed.

`Umar's Memorable Speeches:

Abu Bakr was famous for his lenience to the point that young boys used to run to him whenever he passed by calling out, "O father!" He would pat them on the head. Conversely, `Umar was feared to the point that gathered men would disperse and leave their yards till they figured out how he was to handle them. When `Umar learned of that, he cried out publicly, "Come to *Salat* in congregation." `Umar went up the pulpit and sat where Abu Bakr used to place his feet. When people gathered, `Umar stood up. He started off by praising Allah and glorifying Him, as befits the Lord. He then invoked peace and blessings on the Prophet. `Umar proceeded saying: "I learnt that people have come to fear my strictness and firmness and that they said: '`Umar was severe to us while Allah's Messenger lived among us, then he was severe to us while Abu Bakr was in charge of our affairs. How will he handle us now that he is in charge?'

"Whoever said that is right. I had been in the company of the Prophet, and a servant of his; and he had been, as nobody else was, of extreme lenience and mercy; exactly as Allah describes him saying:

"بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَؤُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ " (التوبة: ١٢٨)

"...to the believers compassionate and merciful." (At-Tawbah: 128) And I was at his disposal, and an "unsheathed sword", till he sheathed me or let me go. Such had I been with him until he passed away much pleased with me. Praise be to Allah, and for this I am greatly happy. Then Abu Bakr came into power to manage the affairs of the faithful; and he was, as you all know, of much graciousness, generosity and lenience; and I was a servant of his and an assistant, mixing my severity with his lenience, thus being at his disposal and an "unsheathed sword", till he sheathed me or her let me go. Such had I been with him until he passed away much pleased with me. Praise be to Allah, and for this I am greatly happy.

"And now, brethren, I have been nominated to manage your affairs. So be aware, then, that that severity has been weakened, but it will be used only against those who are oppressive and aggressive to Muslims. Yet, to those who seek Islam, safety and goodwill, I shall be more lenient than each of them is to others. I will never allow anybody to oppress or be aggressive to another; for, then, I would put his cheek to the ground and set my foot on the other cheek until he yields to the truth. After such severity, though, I will put my cheek to the ground for those who are virtuous and content.

"I will not levy any taxes on your products or on any of the booty Allah has bestowed upon you except what is due, and I will pledge not to expend it except where it should be expended. It is incumbent upon me to increase your grants and livelihoods and make available for you every means of defense, Allah willing. It is incumbent upon me not to throw you into jeopardy, nor confine you to front posts in war; and I pledge that if you go away on missions, I will be responsible for your families until you return to them.

"Therefore, fear Allah, slaves of Allah, and help me against yourselves by leaving me in peace; and help me against myself by ordering beneficence and forbidding abomination, and by giving me good counsel in all yours affairs that Allah has charged me with."

Abu Firas narrates: "`Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab once delivered a sermon in which he said: 'O people, we used to be able to distinguish between good and bad people while the Prophet lived among us, and while the Qur'an was revealed as Allah used to inform us of your affairs. Now that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, has passed away and the revelation has stopped, we will distinguish among you on account of what we tell you: we will think well of whoever does well and will hold him dear thereupon. Conversely, we will think ill of whoever does ill and will loathe him thereupon. None but your Lord and yourselves are in on your intentions. At a certain point, I used to think that whoever reads the Qur'an seeks Allah's satisfaction and reward. However, I am under the impression that certain people read the Qur'an in pursuit of worldly goals. So read the Qur'an and do good deeds seeking Allah's reward. I swear by Allah, I do not send my deputies to abuse you or usurp your money. I actually send them to you to inform you of the teachings of Islam and the Prophetic Tradition. Whoever is subject to anything besides that may file a complaint to me. I swear by Him in whose Hands my soul is, I will avenge him.' `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas leaped asking: 'O Commander of the Faithful, what if a Muslim is put in charge and he wished to punish his subjects, will you take revenge on him, too?' `Umar answered: 'Yes, I swear by Him in Whose Hands my life is, for I saw Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, take revenge on himself. Do not beat Muslims till you demean them, do not stone them till you torture them, do not deny them their rights till you drive them to disbelief and do not station Muslim troops in jungles causing them to be defeated.' " (Reported by Ahmad.)

`Umar, a Matchless Caliph:

It is noteworthy that `Umar's becoming the Caliph ushers a whole new era in the history of Muslims, that abounds in remarkably significant historical events and in which Islam boasted of an ideal ruler and a strong steadfast Muslim, the like of whom was never born anew. More than fourteen decades after his demise, the name of `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab is still remembered as synonymous with justice.

`Umar capably and powerfully struck the balance of justice since day one of his caliphate. Drawing mainly on the tolerance and justice of Islam, yet leaning also on his own laudable character, the praiseworthy traits he inherited from his ancestors as well as his own past experience, `Umar was a memorable example of unblemished justice. In the eyes of `Umar, all people were equal, be they rich or poor, powerful or weak, related or distant. His justice even extended to include non-Muslims, whom he treated with exceptional nobleness. One is not to be surprised at `Umar's remarkable justice, for it was on account of it that Abu Bakr appointed him as Muslims' first judge.

`Umar saw the caliphate as an enormous responsibility he had no choice but to shoulder with all honesty and sincerity. No other ruler could ever have been keener on the good of his subjects. He constantly feared lest they should be entrapped by sin. He was always worried there might be sick or poor Muslims among the masses who were simply incapable of asking for help. May Allah rest his soul in peace for he was truly Muslims' lifesaver, who feared Allah day and night and ordered his subjects to solely obey their Lord, glory be to Him.

`Umar's Famous Night Patrols:

It is indeed unheard of in world history that a ruler went out every night, patrolling the streets, checking the conditions of his subjects himself and sparing no effort in relieving their pains or fulfilling their needs. Though he could have easily appointed an employee of his, or even a number of them, to take care of the job, `Umar knew the caliphate was his own responsibility and was well-aware that he would be held accountable for each and every one of his subjects and for all that goes on in his state, be it trivial or significant. Aslam reports: "While I accompanied `Umar on his night patrols, he leaned against a wall to rest for a while in the hush of the night. He heard a woman say to her daughter: 'Get up, daughter, and mix that milk with water.' The daughter replied: 'Have you not heard of the order of the Commander of the Faithful?' The mother asked, 'What order, daughter?' The girl replied: 'He had his herald announce that milk is not to be mixed with water.' 'Get up and mix the milk, daughter,' insisted the mother, 'there is no way `Umar or his herald could see us now.' The younger girl rejoined: 'O mother, I cannot obey him publicly and disobey him in private.' `Umar listened to the whole conversation and told Aslam: 'Mark their door, Aslam and remember their place.' `Umar then resumed his patrolling. The next morning, he said: 'Head for their house, Aslam, and find out who the addresser and the addressee were, and whether they are married.'

"I headed for their house and found out that the young girl was not married and neither was her mother. I went back to `Umar and informed him of what I found out. `Umar gathered his sons and told them: 'Is anyone of you in need of a wife so I would marry him? Had your father had a desire for women, he would have raced to win this young girl.' `Abdullaah answered, 'I do have a wife.' `Abdur-Rahmaan similarly replied, 'I have a wife, too.' Yet, `Aasim said, 'I have not got a wife, father, so marry me.' `Umar sent for the young girl to come and married her to his son. She gave birth to a daughter, who, in turn, gave birth to `Umar Ibn `Abdul-`Azeez , may Allah rest his soul in peace." (Reported by Ibn Hibbaan.) What ruler would pay no attention to matters of pride and prestige and would not hesitate to marry his own son to a poor young lady, who had nothing to pride herself on except her steadfast faith and fear of Allah?

There is none other than `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab.

`Umar's Exemplary Justice:

`Umar's keenness on maintaining justice was indeed exemplary and unequalled. He never appointed as governors those who eagerly sought the post. He chose instead people of piety, scruples and asceticism. He kept an eye on his rulers and always asked them to have people's best interest at heart.

It is mentioned that every time `Umar appointed a governor, he had him write a pledge and asked a host of *Muhajireen* and *Ansaar* bear witness to it. He would also set the conditions that the governor is not to ride a workhorse, eat fine food, wear soft clothes, nor install a door to keep him from people in need.

While `Umar Ibn Al-Khattab was walking among the people asking them about their governor, he stopped by people of the Hims and asked them: "How are you doing? And how is your governor?" They answered: "He is the best of governors, Commander of the Faithful. Yet, he has built himself a second-floor room to stay in." `Umar immediately wrote a letter and sent it with a messenger whom he ordered to head for the door of the governor's room, amass logs of wood and burn the door down. When the messenger arrived at the door, he did collect some logs of wood and burned it down. People walked in on the governor and broke to him the news that some man burned down the door to his room. The governor returned: "Let him do it, for he is the messenger of the Commander of the Faithful." The messenger then stepped in and handed him the message. No sooner had the governor put down the message than he mounted his riding camel and set out for Madinah. When `Umar saw him, he declared, "Lock him up in the sun for three days." The man was locked up in the sun and when the three days were over, he was brought to `Umar who asked him to take him to Al-H̲arah (where charity sheep and camels were kept). Upon arriving at Al-H̲arah, `Umar threw a *jubbah* on the man, asking him to take off his clothes and put it on instead. `Umar then handed him a bucket and told him to water the camels. The governor was exhausted by the time he finished. `Umar asked, "How long have you held the office, Ibn Qart?" The man answered, "I have for some time, Commander of the Faithful." `Umar returned: "Is that why he have built yourself a second-floor room, out of which to look down on Muslims, widows, orphans... etc.? Go back to your work and do not give me a cause to send for you again." (Quoted from Ar-Riyaad An-Nad̲irah.)

It is mentioned that `Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, went out one day with his fingers in his ears crying, "Here I come! Here I come!" People wondered, "What is that matter with him?" They were told: "He received a message from some of his governors that a river stood as an obstacle, in their way preventing them from proceeding, and that they could not find ships. Their governor therefore proposed: 'Find us a man who is well-versed in the depths of water.' An old man was brought, yet he pleaded, 'I am afraid of the cold (the job was to take place in the cold).' But the old man was made to do it and was sent to the sea. He was immediately stricken by the cold and started crying, 'Rescue, `Umar! Rescue, `Umar!' He thereupon drowned. `Umar wrote to the governor summoning him. For days, `Umar refused to talk to him, for that was his habit whenever he was angry with any of his governors. He then asked him, 'What was the crime of the man you killed?' The governor answered: 'O Commander of the Faithful, I have not deliberately killed him. We found no boats to carry us across the river and we needed to be informed of the depths of the water. We thereupon managed to conquer so and so and collect so and so (i.e. of the booty). `Umar returned: 'A single Muslim is more precious to me than all you have brought. I could have killed you, but I would hate for this to be held as a precedent. Go pay his family bloodmoney and do not let me see your face again.' " (Reported by Al-Baihaqi.)

It is reported that a man left his wife behind in San`aa', leaving to her care her stepson, called Aseel. Now that she was alone, the woman had a lover take her husband's place. The woman one day told her lover, "This boy may disclose our secret, so kill him." But the man refused to. Thereupon, the woman would not answer her lover's calls, forcing him to yield to her demand. The young boy was hence murdered by the lover, another man, and the woman along with her maid; they all butchered him into pieces and put the parts in a leather bag and dumped it into a dry well nearby the village. The lover was afterwards arrested; he confessed to the crime and so did the rest of the murderers. Ya`la – then the governor – wrote `Umar informing him of their crime. `Umar ordered them to be all put to death and said: "I swear that if all of the residents of San`aa' had taken part in killing the boy, I would have killed them all." (Reported by Al-Bukhari.)

`Umar's Unique Loyalty and Gratitude:

`Umar set an example in loyalty and gratitude. Aslam narrates: "Once I went with `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab to the market. A young woman followed him and said: 'O Commander of the Faithful! My husband died, leaving me little children. By Allah, they have not even a sheep's trotter to eat; they have no farms or animals. I am afraid that they may starve to death, and I am the daughter of Khufaf Ibn Imaa' Al-Ghafari, and my father witnessed the Pledge of allegiance of Al-Hudaybiyah with the Prophet.' `Umar stood still and said, 'I welcome my near relatives.' Then he went towards a strong camel which was tied in the house, and carried on it two sacks he had loaded with grains and put between them money and clothes, then gave her its rope to hold and said: 'Lead it, and this provision will last long enough till Allah grants you a good supply.' A man said, 'O Commander of the Faithful! You have given her too much.' '`Umar said disapprovingly: 'May your mother be bereaved of you! By Allah, I saw her father and brother besiege a fort for a long time and conquer it, and then we started discussing what our shares would be from the war booty." (Reported by Al-Bukhari.)

Similarly, `Abdullaah Ibn `Abbaas narrates: " `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab departed for Syria and when he reached Sargh, the commanders of Muslim army, Abu `Ubaydah Ibn Al-Jarraaah and his companions met him and told him that an epidemic had broken out in the Levant. `Umar said, 'Call the *Muhajireen*.' So `Umar consulted them and informed them that an epidemic had broken out in the Levant. They differed in their opinions; some of them pointed: 'We have come for a certain purpose and we do not think that it is proper to give it up.' Others however said (to `Umar): 'There have come along with you other people as well as the companions of Allah's Messenger, so we think we should not take them to this epidemic." So `Umar told them, 'Leave me now.' He then said, 'Call the *Ansaar* for me.' I called them, he consulted them and like the *Muhajireen*, they were divided on the issue. He then said to them, 'Leave me now,' and added, 'Call for me the old men of Quraysh who emigrated in the year of the Conquest of Makkah.' I called them and they gave a unanimous opinion saying: 'Our advice is that you should return with the people and do not take them to the place of the epidemic.' So `Umar made an announcement: 'I will ride back to Madinah in the morning, so you should do the same.' Abu `Ubaydah Ibn Al-Jarraaah asked (`Umar): 'Are you running away from what Allah had predestined?' `Umar simply answered: 'Would that someone else had said such a thing, O Abu `Ubaydah! Yes, we are running from what Allah had predestined to what Allah has predestined. Do you not agree that if you had camels that went down a valley having two places, one green and the other dry, you would graze them on the green one only if Allah had ordained that, and you would graze them on the dry one only if Allah had ordained that?' At that point, \`Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn \`Awf, who had been absent because of some job, showed up and said: I have some knowledge about this. I have heard Allah's Messenger say, *'If you hear about it (an outbreak of plague) in a land, do not go to it; but if a plague breaks out in a country where you are staying, do not run away from it.'* \`Umar thanked Allah and returned to Madinah." (Reported by Al-Bukhari.)

\`Umar, Piety Incarnate:

\`Umar was also the very embodiment of piety and genuine fear of Allah, Exalted be He. No words could possibly do justice to his feelings of piety and devoutness. While \`Uthmaan Ibn \`Affaan was conducting business at Al-\`Aaliyah on a scorching hot day, he spotted a man steering two sturdy male camels; the grounsd was as if it was paved with fire. \`Uthmaan wondered: "The man could have stayed in the city till the weather cooled down, then set out on his trip!" \`Uthmaan 's servant looked closely and told his master, "You see who this man is?" \`Uthmaan took a good look and said: "I can see a man who has pulled his garment over his head, steering two sturdy male camels." The servant looked even closer and said, "Look!" \`Uthmaan looked again only to see \`Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab! He said in amazement, "This is the Commander of the Faithful!" \`Uthmaan got up, opened the door and put out his head. He was lashed by the *Samoom* wind and so immediately withdrew his head. When \`Umar passed before him, \`Uthmaan asked him, "Whatever brings you out now?" \`Umar answered: "Two sturdy males of the charity camels were left behind, and the other camels have already been marched. I wanted to catch up with them at the pasture preserve lest they should be lost and Allah will surely ask me about them." `Uthmaan said: "O Commander of the Faithful, have some water and shelter and we will take care of this." `Umar returned, "Go back to your shelter, `Uthmaan." `Uthmaan then said: "Whoever wishes to set eyes on a powerful honest man, let him look at `Umar; he was then gripped with sorrow." (Reported by Ibn Al-Atheer.)

`Abdullaah Ibn `Umar, may Allah be pleased with them both, narrates: "I bought camels and sent them to the pasture preserve. When they fattened, I brought them back. One day `Umar walked into the market and saw some fat camels. He asked, 'Who do they belong to?' He was told, 'They belong to `Abdullaah Ibn `Umar.' `Umar then kept repeating: 'O `Abdullaah! Well done! Well done! Son of the Commander of the Faithful!' I hurried to him and asked, 'What is wrong, Commander of the Faithful?' He asked me, 'What about those camels?' I answered: 'They are some skinny camels I bought and sent to the pastures seeking what all Muslims do.' `Umar returned: 'Let the camels of the son of the Commander of the Faithful graze! Water the camels of the son of the Commander of the Faithful! Take your capital, `Abdullaah Ibn `Umar and direct the profit to Muslims' treasury.'" (Quoted from *Akhbaar `Umar*.)

Ibn `Abbaas, may Allah be pleased with them both, reports: "`Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab asked me to go to him, which I did. There was spread in front of him a leather carpet all covered with gold. He said, 'Go ahead and distribute this money among your people. Allah has kept such treasures from His Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him and from Abu Bakr and gave it to me. Only He knows best whether it is a blessing or a curse?' I fell to distributing it and separating shares. Yet, I heard a man weep. It turned out to be `Umar weeping and saying: 'I swear by Him in Whose Hands my soul is, Allah has not kept this from His Prophet or from Abu Bakr by way of affliction, nor did He give it to `Umar by way of a blessing.'" (Reported by Ibn Sa`d.)

It is narrated that the `Umar used to place his hand close to fire and say: "Are you able to tolerate this, Ibn Al-Khattaab?" (Quoted from *Akhbaar `Umar*.)

`Ali Ibn Abu Taalib, may Allah be pleased with him, states: "I saw `Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, riding a small camel. I asked, 'Where to, Commander of the Faithful?' He answered, 'One of the charity camels has fled.' I rejoined, 'You have humiliated all your successors.' He said, 'Do not blame me, Abu Al-Hasan. If a young she-goat were to be killed on the Euphrates coast, `Umar would be punished for it on Judgment Day.'"

Qatadah reports: Mu`aikib was in charge of the Treasury during `Umar's caliphate. One day he prepared to distribute all the money in the Treasury only to find a single *Dirham* in it, so he sent it to Ibn `Umar. Mu`aikib says, "I then went home. Shortly afterwards, `Umar's messenger arrived asking me to meet him. I walked in on him only to find the *Dirham* in the palm of his hand. `Umar asked, 'How can you do that, Mu`aikib? Do you have any case against me? Is it your money or mine?' I returned, 'What is wrong?' He answered: 'Do you want the entire nation of Muhammad to hold me accountable for this *Dirham*?' " (Reported by Ibn Al-Jawzi.)

`Umar's Exemplary Austerity:

`Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab was an example to be followed in humbleness. Similarly, he led a harsh life of austerity and lived on coarse food. The one single goal he aspired to was Paradise. `Umar used to patch his clothes with the skin of camels. Notwithstanding his lofty, awe-striking status, `Umar never hesitated to carry a water bottle on his shoulders. He would ride a donkey with no saddle and a riding camel bridled with fiber. He rarely laughed or joked with anyone. He wore a ring on which was engraved, "Death Teaches the Best Lesson, `Umar."

Qatadah reports: "When `Umar arrived in Syria, he was brought food, the like of which he had never tasted before. He therefore said: 'This is for us? What about poor Muslims who live on barley bread, which never satisfies their hunger?' Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed, may Allah be pleased with him, answered, 'They will be rewarded with Paradise.' `Umar's eyes thereupon were filled with tears, and he said: 'If this is our share, while they end up winning Paradise, they are way ahead of us.'" (Reported by Ibn Al-Jawzi.)

When `Umar first became the Caliph, he declared: "I am entitled to only two garments to be paid for from the Treasury, one in winter and another in summer, as well as provisions for my household similar to the provisions of an average man from Quraysh who is not one of their wealthiest. I am only an ordinary Muslim."

It is also related that `Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was once late for the Friday congregational *Salat*. When he arrived at the mosque, he went up the pulpit and apologized to people saying: "I was held back because of this garment of mine. It is the only one I have got and it was being sewn." The garment was white with the sleeves hardly reaching his wrists. (Reported by Ibn Sa`d.)

Jabir Ibn `Abdillah mentions: "`Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him, saw me carrying some meat.

He asked me, 'What is this, Jabir?' I answered, 'I hungered for meat so I bought some.' `Umar returned: 'Do you go out and buy whatever you hunger for?! Do you not worry about what this verse tells you:

"أَذْهَبْتُمْ طَيِّبَاتِكُمْ فِي حَيَاتِكُمُ الدُّنْيَا وَاسْتَمْتَعْتُم بِهَا. (ا لأحقاف: ٢٠)

"Ye received your good things in the life of the world" ?' "(Al-Ahqaf: 20)

It is recounted that Hafs Ibn Abul-`Aas used to be present when `Umar ate, yet never touched the food. `Umar asked him, "Why is it that you never join us?" He replied, "The food you eat is rough and coarse. Back home, I will find good food prepared for me." `Umar returned: "Do you think I am incapable of ordering a ewe to be skinned, flour to be sifted and placed in a piece of cloth then baked into tender bread, and amounts of raisins to be soaked in water." Hafs wondered, "I can see you are well-aware of what a luxurious life is all about!" `Umar answered: "I am. I swear by Him in Whose Hands my soul is, had I not been worried that the reward for my good deeds might diminish, I would have joined you in this life of yours." (Reported by Ibn Sa`d.)

`Umar was once admonished and told: "If you eat good food, you will be more capable of discharging your duties." `Umar returned: "My two companions followed a certain course in life. Should I digress from it, I will not enjoin a status equal to theirs."

During the *Ramadah* Year[1] (i.e. the Ash Year), `Umar lived on bread and oil till his skin darkened. He used to say: "Damned would I be as a ruler, if I ate to my heart's content while people went hungry."

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[1] *`Aam Ar-Ramaadah* or the Ramaadah Year refers to the time when Arabs were afflicted with a severe famine that lasted for almost eight months, and during which `Umar was an admirable example of austerity.

True are indeed the words of Talhah Ibn `Ubayd when he said: "`Umar was not the first among us to embrace Islam, nor the first to migrate. Yet, he outdid us all in renouncing worldly pleasures and was certainly the keenest on winning Allah's reward in the Hereafter." (Reported by Ibn `Aasaakir.)

`Umar's Endless Humbleness:

Though the Caliph, who was on top of an incessantly expanding state, `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab was a living example of humbleness not only to the poorest and humblest of his subjects, but also for entire generations of Muslims up to our present time.

Qatadah states: `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him, stepped out of the mosque with Al-Jarood. He saw an old woman sitting out on the street. `Umar greeted her, the woman answered his greetings. She then said: "Oh, `Umar! I was there when you used to be called 'Little `Umar' at *Sooq `Ukaaz* (the `Ukaaz market), when you would brawl with little boys. Days passed by and you came to be called `Umar, and again days passed by till you came to be called the Commander of the Faithful. So, fear Allah when dealing with your subjects and remember that whoever fears death avoids sin. `Umar wept. Al-Jarood intervened: " Hey, you had the audacity to reduce the Commander of the Faithful to tears!" `Umar returned: "It is all right. Do you not know who she is? She is Khawlah Bint Hakeem whom Allah, high in the Heavens, heard complain. This is all the more reason why `Umar should listen to her words." (Quoted from Al-Misbah.)

`Umar stepped out of his house in the hush of the night and was spotted by Talhah. `Umar walked into a house and then headed for another. The next morning, Talhah made it to that house where he found a blind crippled old woman. He asked her: "Why does that man come to your house?" She answered: "He takes care of me; brings me what I need and guards me against harm." Talhah thought to himself: "May your mother be bereaved of you, Tulahah! Are you trying to find fault with `Umar?" (Reported by Abu Na`eem.)

A delegation from Iraq, among whom was Al-Ahnaf Ibn Qays, came to meet `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab on a blistering hot summer day. Shielding his head with a cloak, `Umar was busy covering the charity camels with tar. He called out: "Take off your clothes, Al-Ahnaf and come help the Commander of the Faithful with this camel for it is one of the charity camels, that is, the rights of orphans, widows and poor people." One of the delegates said: "May Allah forgive you, Commander of the Faithful, can you not just order one of the charity bondmen to do the job?" `Umar replied: "Who is more enslaved than myself or Al-Ahnaf? Whoever is in charge of Muslims' affairs owes his subjects exactly what a bondman owes his master, namely offering sound advice and performing his duty with all honesty." (Quoted from *Akhbaar `Umar*.)

`Umar was reported to have entered Jerusalem riding a workhorse, which kept swaggering. `Umar started lashing it with his outfit and then said: "May whoever taught you this be damned! This is a sign of arrogance." `Umar then dismounted it and said: "You had me carried on a devil's back. Once I dismounted, I had no feeling of ostentation. (Reported by At-Tabari.)

It is also narrated that `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab called out: "Come to *Salat* in congregation." `Umar went up the pulpit and sat where Abu Bakr used to place his feet. When people gathered, `Umar stood up. He started off by praising Allah and glorifying Him, as befits the Lord. He then invoked peace and blessings on the Prophet. `Umar proceeded saying: "I saw in my dream that I was shepherding the sheep of my aunts of the Banu Makhzoom tribe. They handed me a handful of dates and raisins, which sustained me for the whole day, tough as they may be." When `Umar finished, he stepped down the pulpit. `Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn `Awf told him: "You insist on censuring yourself, Commander of the Faithful?" `Umar replied: "Woe unto you, Ibn `Awf! When I am on my own, I think: 'I am the Commander of the Faithful. Who could possibly be better than me?' That is why I mean to show myself who I really am." (Reported by Ibn Sa`d.)

Al-Hasan reports: "`Umar went out on a hot summer day, with his garment pulled over his head. A young boy riding on a donkey passed him by. `Umar called out: 'Take me along, boy.' The boy jumped off his donkey and said: 'Get on it, Commander of the Faithful!' `Umar returned: 'No, you do, and I will ride behind you. You want me to sit on the soft part while you sit on the hard part!' Thus, `Umar rode into the city sitting behind the boy, hence causing all people to stare." (Quoted from *Hayatus-Sahabah*, *The Lives of the Companians*.)

Abu Mahdhoorah states: "I was at `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab's, may Allah be pleased with him, when Safawaan Ibn 'Umayyah brought a bowl wrapped in a cloak. It was placed before `Umar. `Umar called a host of poor people to join him, then said: 'Damned are those who refuse to eat with poor people!' Safawaan returned: 'It is not that we refuse to let them join us; I swear by Allah that we simply cannot afford fine food both for ourselves and them, too.' " (Reported by Al-Bukhari.)

There is no better evidence of his indisputable humbleness than his story with Al-Hurmudhaan (a Persian king) after Muslims' conquering Persia. A delegation of Muslims, among whom were Anas Ibn Malik, Al-Ahnaf Ibn Qays along with Al-Hurmudhaan arrived at Madinah bringing one-fifth of the booty. They walked in the city, asked to be directed to the house of the Commander of the Faithful, where they found no one. The delegation thereupon turned and left. On their way, they came across some boys playing so they asked them where they could find `Umar. The boys answered: "He is asleep at the mosque, resting his head on his hooded cloak. The delegation headed for the mosque where they did find `Umar asleep, with his head resting on his hooded cloak, which he had put on to receive the delegation in, and with his *Dirah* in his hand. There was no one else in the mosque. Al-Hurmudhaan asked, "Where is `Umar?" Muslims replied, "There he is." People whispered to one another so as not to wake him up. Yet, Al-Hurmudhaan kept wondering, "Where are his chamberlains?! Where are his guards?!" Muslims answered, "He has got no chamberlains, no guards, no scribe and no *Diwan* (consultative assembly)." Al-Hurmudhaan returned, "He must be a Prophet!" Muslims returned: "No, but he acts like one." (Reported by Ibn Katheer.)

`Umar Follows the Example of the Prophet:

`Umar spared no effort in following the example of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and walking closely in his footsteps. History abounds in instances where he could not have been keener on abiding by the Prophet's Tradition.

`Atikah Bint Zayd Ibn `Amr, `Umar's wife, mentions that whenever she asked `Umar's permission to go to the mosque, he would be silent. `Umar used to tell her: "You know that I hate that you go out." `Umar was a man of enormous *Ghayrah* (i.e. he was very protective of his women out of self-respect). His wife would return: "I swear by Allah I will go out unless you prevent me." Yet, `Umar never did. (Reported by Malik.) Even the day `Umar was stabbed, his wife was in the mosque.

In another narration: It is reported that `Umar's wife used to perform the morning (*Fajr*) and the night *Salat* (*`Ishaa'*) in congregation at the mosque. She was asked: "Why do you go out when you know he hates that on account of his *Ghairah*?" `Umar's wife replied: "Why can he not forbid me to?" They answered: "He would never do because of the Prophet's saying: '*If your women ask permission to go to the mosque at night, allow them.*' " (Reported by Al-Bukhari.)

However, despite `Umar's excessive *Ghayrah,* he would never disobey the Prophet's command. This is hardly surprising for it was the Glorious Qur'an that taught Al-Farooq his flawless manners and it was the Prophet who was his revered mentor. There was no way he could possibly go against the command of his role model, whom he held dearest of all people.

Zayd Ibn Aslam mentions that `Umar gave preference to early emigrants (*Muhajireen*), whereas he offered (less grants from the Treasury) to their offspring less. Likewise, he preferred Usamah Ibn Zayd to `Abdullaah Ibn `Umar, his son. `Abdullaah Ibn `Umar narrates: "A man told me, 'The Commander of the Faithful has preferred over you someone who is not older than you, who did not emigrate before you or take part in any great battle you did not take part in.' I therefore spoke to the Caliph and said: 'O Commander of the Faithful, you have preferred over me someone who is not older than me, who did not emigrate before me or take part in any great battle I did not take part in.' `Umar asked, 'Who do you mean?' I answered, ' Usamah Ibn Zayd.' 'I swear by Allah, that it is true,' rejoined `Umar, 'I have done so because Zayd Ibn Al-Harith was dearer to Allah's Messenger than `Umar and Usamah Ibn Zayd was dearer to Allah's Messenger than `Abdullaah Ibn `Umar. That is why I did what I did.' " (Reported by Ibn Sa`d.)

Harithah Ibn Mudrab states that he went on a pilgrimage with `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, and the elite of Syria came to meet him and said: "We have brought some of the bondmen and riding animals we possess, so you would take some of them by way of obligatory charity (*Zakat*) to purify our money." `Umar said: "None of my companions did this before, but wait till I seek Muslims' opinions." (Reported by Ahmad.)

Moreover, it is reported that As-Saa'ib Ibn Yazeed narrates: "I was standing in the mosque and somebody threw gravel at me. I looked and found that he was `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab. He said to me, 'Bring me those two.' When I did, he said to them: 'Who are you? (Or) where do you come from?' They replied, 'We are from Ta'if.' `Umar said: 'Were you from this city (Madinah), I would have punished you for raising your voices in the mosque of Allah's Messenger." (Reported by Al-Bukhari.)

Highlights on `Umar's life:

Qatadah states: Though a Caliph, `Umar used to wear a wool garment ragged with four leather patches. He would go about in markets carrying his famous *Dirah* (i.e. a stick) with which to punish wrong-doers, and pass by threads and fruit kernels, pick them up and throw them in people's houses so they would make use of them.

`Utabah Ibn Farqad is reported to have spoken to `Umar about the poor food he ate. `Umar replied: "Woe unto you!

Shall I enjoy the reward for my good deeds in this worldly life?" It is reported that when people were afflicted with famine, `Umar refrained from eating fat or fatty food for a year. Anas further reports: "`Umar's stomach clamored because he lived solely on oil during the *Ramadah* Year, when he solemnly refused to eat fat. He once tapped on his belly with his finger and said: 'We have got nothing but oil for you until people manage to survive.' "

Anas reports: I saw four patches on `Umar's garment. It is further reported that `Umar was seen wearing a garment patched with leather. `Abdullaah Ibn `Aamir Ibn Rabee`ah states: "I went on a pilgrimage with `Umar. He would not pitch a tent, but would spread a piece of cloth or skin on a tree and sit in its shade." `Abdullaah Ibn `Eesa Ibn Abi Layla states that there were two dark lines in `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab's face marked by excessive tears. Further, Al-Hasan Al-Basri and Hishaam Ibn Al-Hasan narrate that `Umar sometimes lost consciousness after reciting a verse from the Qur'an, whereupon he would be taken ill and visited for days. Anas narrates: "Though separated by a wall, I heard `Umar cry, '`Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, the Commander of the Faithful, well done! I swear by Allah, unless you fear Him, He will torture you.' "

`Umar was also seen to pick up a straw off the ground and say: "Would that I were this straw! Would that I were nothing! Would that my mother never bore me!" `Umar was also narrated to have carried a leather water-carrier, hanging down from his neck. He was asked why he did that, so he replied: "I was growing self-complacent, so I meant to humiliate myself." `Umar's son-in-law asked him to give him money from the public Treasury. `Umar chided him saying; "Do you want me to meet Allah (on Judgment Day) as a treacherous king?" He then handed him ten thousand *Dirhams* from his own money. It is mentioned that `Umar was engaged in trade even when he was a Caliph. `Umar was also reported to have said: "People I hold the dearest are the ones who point to me my shortcomings." Ibn `Umar states: "Whenever `Umar was enraged and the name of Allah was mentioned before him, or was reminded of Allah's torture or listened to a verse of the Qur'an, he refrained from what he intended to do." `Umar was also narrated to have said, "To achieve the good of the people, replacing their emir with another would be the cheapest price to pay."

`Umar: A Pioneering Mentality:

Al-`Aaskari states: "He was the first to be referred to with the title *'Amirul-Mu'mineen'* (i.e. the Commander of the Faithful), the first to establish a Muslim calendar starting with the *Hijrah* (i.e. the emigration), the first to establish a public Treasury, the first to pray during the nights of Ramadan, the first to patrol the city at night, the first to punish for writing defamatory poetry, the first to set the penalty for drinking wine as eighty lashes, the first to prohibit *Mut`ah* marriage (i.e. marriage for the sake of sexual pleasure), the first to forbid the selling of children's bondwomen mothers, the first to settle differences by having four *Takbirahs* (saying Allah is the Greatest) in funeral *Salat*, the first to establish a *Diwan* (i.e. a consultative assembly), the first to launch conquests and collect the *Kharaj* (i.e. land tax) from land-owners, the first to ship food from Egypt to Madinah across the Ailah sea, the first to save part of the charity money for future use, the first to carry out adjustment when the shares exceeded the total estate, the first to levy *Zakat* on horses, the first to pray, 'May Allah grant you a long life', which he said to `Ali and the first to say, 'May Allah support you', which he said to `Ali, too.

Al-Nawawi notes: He was the first to use the *Dirah*. It is also stated that after his decease, later caliphs were told, "`Umar's *Dirah* was feared far more then your swords." He was the first to appoint judges in the provinces and the first to divide the land into provinces: Al-Koufah, Al-Basrah, the Arab Peninsula, Syria, Egypt and Al-Moosil.

Malik states that it was on `Umar's suggestion that the words "I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah" were added to the *Adhaan* (i.e. the call to *Salat*), and likewise the words "*Salat* is better than sleep" to the *Adhaan* for the dawn *Salat*. However, the more correct report is that it was Bilal who first inserted the latter words in the call to the dawn *Salat* and the Prophet retained them.

`Umar was the first Muslim ruler to levy a customs duty named `*Ushr*, the first Muslim ruler to organize a census, the first Muslim ruler to mint coins, the first Muslim ruler to organize a system of canals for irrigation, the first Muslim ruler to formally organize provinces, cities and districts. He established the system of guesthouses and rest houses on major routes to and from major cities. He established schools throughout the land and allocated liberal salaries for teachers. He was the first to place the law of inheritance on firm bases. He was the first to establish trusts, and the first ruler in history to separate the judiciary from the executive.

He went to every length to provide effective and speedy justice for the people. He set up an effective system of judicial administration under which justice was administered according to the principles of Islam. *Qadis* or judges were appointed at all administrative levels for maintaining justice and were chosen for their integrity and learning in Islamic law. High salaries were paid to them and they were appointed from among the wealthy and those of high social standing so as not to be influenced by the social position of any litigants. Also, the *Qadis* were not allowed to engage in trade.

He was the first to establish a war department, put army reserves on the payroll, establish the land revenue department, survey and assess lands, devise a system for the taxation of the produce of the sea and appoint officials for its collection, the first to permit traders of foreign lands to trade in the country, the first to establish the system of jails, organize the police department, establish military barracks at strategic points, distinguish pedigree and non-pedigree horses, employ secret reports and emissaries, provide for and bring up foundlings, issued the ruling that Arabs, whether Muslims or non-Muslims, could not be made slaves, allocate stipends for the poor among the Jews and Christians, persuade Abu Bakr to collect the Qur'an and execute the work under his own care, formulate the principal of *Qiyaas* or judicial analogy, ordained the performing of *Taraweeh Salat* (i.e. special Ramadan night prayer) in congregation, establish that three divorces pronounced at one session are held as binding, levy *Zakat* on the Christians of Bani Taghlab in lieu of the *Kharaj*, give salaries to *Imams* and *mu'adhdhins* (i.e. callers to prayer), provide light in mosques at night, stipulate punishment for writing satires and lampoons and prohibit the mention of women's names in lyric poems although the custom was very ancient in Arabia.

Events in the Life of `Umar:

`Umar's first words upon his ascending the pulpit, when he became the Caliph, were, "O Allah, I am severe, so grant me lenience, weak, so grant me power and miserly, so render me generous." (Reported by Ibn Sa`d.)

`Umar is also reported to have said, "I regard people's money in the public Treasury the way a guardian regards an orphan's money; in times of ease of living, I never take any of it, in times of dire straits, I resort to the Treasury to support me and in times of plenty, I discharge my debts." (Reported by Ibn Sa`d and Sa`eed Ibn Mansoor.)

`Umar is also narrated to have gone out one day heading for the pulpit. He was then suffering from a malady and honey was prescribed for him. There was a vessel containing honey in the public Treasury. Yet, he said, "I will take it only if you permit me, otherwise it would be unlawful for me to do so." So they gave him permission to. (Reported by Ibn Sa`d.)

`Umar was reported to have stuck his hand in the posterior of a camel saying, "I worry I may be asked about what is inside of you."

Ibn `Umar mentions: "Whenever `Umar intended to forbid people to do something, he told his own household, 'If ever I found out that any of you violated a prohibition of mine, my punishment would be doubled.'"

`Umar was also narrated to have asked Salmaan, "Am I a king or a Caliph?" Salmaan answered, "If you levied a *Dirham*, or a little more or a little less, on Muslims and spend it on what it should not be spent on, you would be a king and not a Caliph." Thereupon, `Umar shed tears. (Reported by Ibn Sa`d.)

`Umar was also recounted to have wondered: " I swear by Allah, I do not know whether I am a king or a caliph? Were I a king, that would be significant." He was then told: " O Commander of the Faithful, there is a difference between the two." `Umar asked, "What is the difference?" The man answered: " A caliph takes none but what he should rightfully do and devotes it to none but to what he should do and you certainly do, praise be to Allah. But a king, on the other hand, oppresses people, taking from this and giving that." `Umar was silent.

`Umar was reported to have said, "The way to handle matters is through firmness that involves no coercion, coupled with lenience that involves no weakness."

It is related that for a period of time, `Umar never depended on the Treasury to support himself or his household, until he was afflicted with poverty. He therefore sought the counsel of the Companions of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. He said: "I have thought about this. So how much am I allowed to take?" `Ali answered: "Enough to buy you lunch and dinner." `Umar hence acted upon `Ali's counsel.

Though the Caliph, `Umar was far from being a dictator. He valued counseling and followed the advice he was given if he believed it to be sound. It is recounted that a woman said to `Umar: "My husband prays all night and fasts all day." `Umar said, "You have thus best praised your husband." Ka`b Ibn Siwaar noted, "She is here to complain." `Umar asked, "How so?" Ka`b replied, "She does not sleep with her husband." `Umar returned: "Since you have got the point, what will be your ruling?" Ka`b answered: "O Commander of the Faithful, since Allah allows a man to marry four women, that means she is entitled to a day of every four days and a night of every four nights." (Reported by `Abur-Raziq.)

Similarly, on one of his night patrols, `Umar heard a woman sing verses of poetry in which she complained of her husband's absence saying: "O by Allah, had it not been for my fear of Allah, this bed would have been shaken and quaked by some illicit act committed on it." `Umar hurriedly went back to his daughter Hafsah and asked her: "How long can a woman endure the absence of her husband?" Hafsah replied: "A month, or two, or three, till a maximum of four months." Being the scrupulous merciful ruler he was, `Umar immediately sent for the woman's husband to come home and be with his wife. Further, he issued a command that all husbands taking part in *Jihad* are not to be away from their wives any longer than four months.

It is narrated that a son of `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab's walked in on his father, all dressed up. `Umar beat him with his *Dirah* till his son cried. Hafsah asked him, "Why did you beat him?" He replied: "I realized he admired himself so I meant to humble him."

It is reported that Abu Bakr said: "I swear by Allah, I wish I were a plant by the road, along which a camel would pass by, open its mouth, devour me, chew me up me, spit me out and discharge the rest of me as wastes rather than be a man." `Umar then returned: "I wish I were a sheep fattened by its owners, so that when I grew as fat as I could, dear guests would call on them. My owners would thus slaughter me, grill some of me, dry some and eat me up rather than be a man." (Reported by Al-Bayhaqyy.)

It is stated that `Umar and `Uthmaan Ibn `Affaan were always in dispute over matters so that it might have seemed that they never agreed on a thing. However, they never parted except on good terms. (Reported by Al-Khateeb.)

In `Umar's very first sermon, he is reported to have started off by praising Allah then proceeding, "I have been afflicted with you as my responsibility and you have been afflicted with me as your ruler. I am now in charge of you after the decease of both my companions (i.e. the Prophet and Abu Bakr). Whoever is in our presence shall be in our charge. Whoever is away shall be in the charge of powerful honest people. Whoever discharges his duties, we shall enable him to do even better, while whoever sins we shall punish him. May Allah forgive your sins and mine." (Reported by Ibn Sa`d.)

Al-Hasan states: "`Umar sent a message to Hudhayfah to distribute among people their livelihood. The latter wrote back saying, 'We did distribute it, yet plenty of money is left.' `Umar then wrote him saying: 'This is Allah's bounty that He bestowed on them. It does not belong to Muhammad or to His household. So distribute it among the people.'"

It is narrated that a man asked `Umar: " Will you appoint your son `Abdullaah Ibn `Umar as your successor?" `Umar answered: "May Allah fight you! I swear by Allah that this was never my intention. Would I appoint as my successor a man who failed to do better than divorce his wife?"

`Umar's Endless Tolerance:

It is an unfortunate situation that Muslims nowadays frequently engage in brawls and lapse in antagonism. This all boils down to a question of faith; present time Muslims lean on weak faith. They rarely ever turn to the Glorious Qur'an wherein Allah commands us to show mercy, tolerance and turn away from the ignorant.

Despite being the Commander of the Faithful, who was more than capable of taking revenge, `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him, could not but resign to Allah's command to show mercy.

Ibn `Abbaas, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, narrates: "`Uyaynah Ibn Hisn Ibn Hudhayfah, `called on his nephew, Al-Har Ibn Qays. He was one of those people whom `Umar condemned. Scjholars of the Qur'an were members of `Umar's consultative council, be they old or young. `Uyaynah said to his nephew: 'O nephew, `Umar is pleased with you, so ask for his permission that I talk to him.' Al-Har replied, 'I will.' Ibn `Abbaas proceeds: Al-Har requested `Umar's permission for his uncle, and `Umar did grant him that. When `Uyaynah walked in on `Umar, he said: ' O Ibn Al-Khattaab, I swear by Allah, your offerings are not generous, and your judgment is not just.' `Umar was enraged and he was about to punish him, when Al-Har told him: 'O Commander of the Faithful, Allah, Exalted be He, said to His Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him:

"خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ." (الأعراف: ١٩٩)

"Hold to forgiveness; command what is right; but turn away from the ignorant." (Al-A`raaf: 199) He is one of the ignorant.' I swear by Allah, no sooner did `Umar listen to the verse, than he stopped. `Umar never plunged into action upon listening to the Glorious Qur'an.

`Umar's Mercy on His Subjects:

Throughout `Umar's caliphate, Muslims basked in his endless mercy and kind-heartedness.

Zayd Ibn Aslam reports that his father said: "I accompanied `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him, to Harat-Waqim. When we reached Sirraar, we saw a blazing fire. `Umar said: 'O Aslam, I can see that those travelers have been overwhelmed by the night and the cold. Let us hurry to them.' We rushed all the way till we approached them. We spotted a woman surrounded by her children and a pot placed on fire; they were without food. `Umar said, ' Peace be on you, people of the light.' (He hated to call them 'people of the fire'.) The woman answered `Umar, 'Peace be on you.'

`Umar asked, ' Can I come closer?' The woman replied, 'Do if you mean well or else leave.' `Umar stepped closer and asked, 'What is wrong with you?' The woman returned, 'We have been overwhelmed by the night and the cold.' `Umar again asked, 'What is wrong with those boys?' She said, 'They are without food.' `Umar asked her, 'What is in this pot?' 'Only water so as to keep them quiet till they fall asleep;' the woman rejoined, 'may Allah punish `Umar for that.' `Umar returned: 'May Allah have mercy on you! How would `Umar know about you?' The woman commented: 'How can he take charge of us then be heedless of our plight?!' `Umar returned to me and said, 'Let us go.' We hurried back till we arrived at the flour store. He took out a sack of flour and an amount of oil, then said to me, 'Put it on my back.' I said, 'I will carry it for you.' He repeated his command twice or three times and every time I said, ' I will carry it for you.' He finally told me: 'Will you carry my sins for me on Judgment Day? May you be bereaved of your mother.' I placed the load on his back, whereupon he left and I followed him. We hurried back to the woman. `Umar put down his load before her. He took out some of the flour and told her, 'Pour the flour while I stir for you.' `Umar kept blowing on the fire beneath the pot. He had a long beard; I watched the smoke go up in the air through his beard, until the food in the pot was cooked. `Umar took the pot off the fire and said: ' Feed them and I will cool the food for you.' `Umar did not prepare to leave until the children had had their fill of the food. He then left her the rest of it. When `Umar and I got up, the woman effusively kept praising him: 'May you be handsomely rewarded! You ought to be in charge of our affairs instead of the Commander of the Faithful!' `Umar returned: 'Should you go to the Commander of the Faithful, you will find me there!' `Umar then walked away for a short distance then sat down on the ground facing them. I kept telling him, 'This does not become you!' Yet, he would not speak to me. I watched the little boys brawl, laugh then peacefully fall asleep.

At that point, `Umar got up praising Allah. He then approached me and said: 'Hunger kept them up and in tears, Aslam. I therefore decided not to leave until I saw what I have just done.'" (Reported in Tareekh At-Tabari)

Ibn `Umar states: "A host of merchants arrived and headed for the mosque. `Umar suggested to `Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn `Awf: 'How about if we guard them all night?' The two of them thus stayed up all night to guard them and offer as many *Salat* as they managed to. `Umar heard the crying of a young boy so he approached him and admonished his mother saying, ' Fear Allah and take good care of your child.' He then went back to his place. `Umar again heard the child's crying and again went back to his mother and repeated to her his very same words. He then headed back to his place. Towards the end of the night, `Umar heard the child burst in tears again. So he headed for his mother and reprimanded her saying: 'Woe unto you! What kind of a mother are you? Why is it that your son cannot be pacified all night long?' The woman replied: 'O Allah's servant, I have grown bored of you tonight! I am trying to wean him but he refuses to be weaned.' `Umar asked: 'Why would you do that?' The woman explained, 'Because `Umar grants subsistence only to weaned children.' He then asked, 'How old is your child?' She answered, 'So and so months.' 'Woe unto you,' rejoined `Umar, 'do not rush him.' `Umar next led Muslims in *Salat*, though people were hardly able to listen to his voice as he read the Qur'an because of the child's wailing. When he ended the *Salat*, he thought to himself: 'May I be cursed! How many Muslims children have I killed?' He then had his herald announce: 'Do not wean your children prematurely, for we shall grant subsistence to every newborn Muslim child.' Likewise, he sent messages to the distant provinces informing them that every newborn Muslim child shall be granted subsistence." (Reported by Ibn Sa`d.)

Abu `Uthmaan narrates: "`Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, charged a man from the Banu Assad tribe with a certain responsibility. When `Umar walked in to greet him, one of the man's children approached him so `Umar kissed him. The man thereupon wondered: 'How can you kiss him, Commander of the Faithful?! I swear by Allah, I have never kissed any of my children!' `Umar thus returned: 'I swear you must be even less merciful to other people's children. You are not to perform any job for me.' `Umar thereupon fired him. Alternatively, "`Umar is reported to have said: 'It is not my fault that you were born merciless. Allah has mercy only on those who are merciful to others.' He then ordered that the man be deposed because if he never had mercy on his own children, how could he possibly be merciful to his subjects?" (Reported by Al-Bukhari and `Abdur-Raziq.)

`Umar: The Founder of the Muslim State:

By and large, `Umar's caliphate is generally regarded as a landmark era in Muslim history. Readers of Muslims' early history marvel at `Umar's unique genius which was illustrated in his engineering of a Muslim state in the modern sense. In spite of the fact that it was Abu Bakr who initiated the Muslim state, he died only two years after he assumed his post as the Caliph. He therefore never got to see the extent that the Muslim state was to attain in the succeeding years. It was `Umar that proceeded along the lines Abu Bakr had set and the results he reaped were indeed laudable.

It is hence expedient to attempt to bring into the spotlight some of the most prominent of `Umar's achievements along his ten-year long caliphate. His first achievement was his devising a proper title for himself as well as for those who assumed the post thereafter. As noted earlier, `Umar realized that though Abu Bakr was referred to as the Prophet's successor, it was hardly viable to continue to use such system of appellation. He therefore consulted The Muslims who suggested: "We are the faithful and you are our Commander. So let your title be 'the Commander of the Faithful'." The title thereafter was used to refer to all succeeding caliphs.

Secondly, Arabs were accustomed to dating happenings by reference to grand events like the Year of the Elephant and similar landmark incidents. However, it is reported that a debt bond was referred to `Umar, according to which the debt was to be recovered in Sha`baan. `Umar asked: "Which Sha`baan? Sha`baan of this present year or the previous or the coming one?" `Umar therefore realized that there was a definite need to establish some significant event as a fixed reference point in relation to which events and incidents could be dated. He gathered the Prophet's Companions and sought their opinions. Views varied as to whether the Prophet's birth, the revelation of the Qur'an unto him, his migration or death should be set as the beginning of the Islamic calendar. After much consultation and deliberation, they came to agree that the Prophet's migration to Madinah is to be established as the starting point of the Islamic calendar, being the one most significant event that granted the call of Islam, still in the craddle then, much-needed strength and which caused it to flourish and spread. They also set the month of Mu<u>h</u>arram as the first month of the year. This took place in Rabei` Al-Awal, 16 AH.

Thirdly, `Umar collected the *<u>Kh</u>araj* (i.e. land tax) from land-owners. Likewise, he levied the *Jiziyah* (i.e. a tax paid by non-Muslims in return for their living under Muslims' protection) on non-Muslim residents of the countries conquered by The Muslims. He levied forty eight *Dirhams* on the rich, twenty four *Dirhams* on medium-income people and twelve *Dirhams* on the poor. The *<u>Kh</u>araj* amounted to a hundred and twenty million D*irhams*, excluding the *<u>Kh</u>araj* levied on other states. Hence, huge amounts of money were sent to the Treasury, on account of the booty, the *Kharaj*, the *Jiziyah* and the obligatory charity (*Zakat*). This, in turn, gave rise to the need to register account books and decide how that money was to be expended.

\`Umar consulted The Muslims as regards that. Al-Waleed Ibn Hishaam Ibnul Mugheerah pointed: "I have been to The Levant, Commander of the Faithful, and have seen how kings there keep a *Diwan* (official records) and recruit soldiers." \`Umar followed his advice. He had names of soldiers registered in books along with the share each was entitled to. He also kept books of all the money sent to the Treasury as well as the money granted to each Muslim. \`Umar gave preference to Muslims who embraced Islam before others and took part in more battles than others. This is contrary to what Abu Bakr did, giving equal grants to everyone. When \`Umar was asked about that, he argued: "I cannot hold those who fought against the Prophet and those who fought on his side on an equal footing." He therefore placed at the top of the list the Prophet's wives. They were followed by The Muslims who took part in the Badr battle... etc. It is significant to note at this point that \`Umar allocated three thousand *Dirhams* to his own son, whereas he gave four thousand to Usamah, explaining that saying: "I did so because Zayd Ibn Al-Harith was dearer to Allah's Messenger than \`Umar and Usamah Ibn Zayd was dearer to Allah's Messenger than \`Abdullaah Ibn \`Umar. That is why I did what I did." (Reported by Ibn Sa\`d.)

\`Umar gave instructions that Banu Hashim, the Prophet's clan, were to be the first on the list. The Prophet's nearest kinship were given priority to the rest of Banu Hashim. Next, people were arranged as regards when they embraced Islam, how hard they struggled for the cause of Islam and how well they have memorized the Qur'an. He then earmarked an equal share to the rest of The Muslims and promised: "Should we receive more money, I will grant every Muslim four thousand *Dirhams*: a thousand for his journeys, another for his weapon, a third for his household and a fourth for his riding animal." This took place in Muharrum, 20 AH.

Likewise, when `Umar realized that some mothers hastened the weaning of their children, he declared that he would grant subsistence to every newborn Muslim child even before it was weaned. It is also narrated that towards the end of his life, `Umar was inclined to the idea of granting all Muslims equal shares of money. He was therefore reported to have said: "I swear by Allah, if I make it to the next year, I will allocate equals shares to all people and treat them all equally."

Thirdly, `Umar's main aim was maintaining justice throughout the Muslim state. That is why `Umar appointed judges to handle people's cases away from the governors. `Umar appointed Abu Ad-Dardaa', one of the Prophet's Companions, as the judge of Madinah and Shurayh Ibn Al-Harith Al-Kindi as the Judge of Kufah and Qays Ibn Abil `Aas As-Sahmeyy as the judge of Egypt. Among the most famous judges `Umar appointed was Abu Musa Al-Ash`areyy.

`Umar set a particular constitution for judges to abide by when settling disputes. He sent this constitution to all judges in various provinces of the Muslim state, as it reflects the fundamentals of the judicial system in his era. `Umar's message to his judges read: "In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful, from Allah's servant, from `Umar, the Commander of the Faithful, to Allah's servant, Ibn Qais, peace be with you. The administration of justice is a definite obligation and a followed tradition. If a dispute is referred to you, there is no point in passing the right ruling if it cannot be put into effect. Treat people equally in your presence, and in your decisions, so that the weak despair not of justice, and the high-placed harbor no hope of favoritism. The onus of the proof rests with the plaintiff, while the party who denies must do so on oath. Reconciliation among The Muslims is legitimate provided that it does not render lawful what is unlawful or vice versa. Should you pass a certain judgment then realise that you were at fault, and after that you were guided to the right ruling, let nothing dissuade you from declaring the truth, for the truth is the basic rule, and reverting to is better then wading further in injustice. Always consult your mind on whatever issue you are hesitant about and of which there is no mention in the Glorious Qur'an or the Prophetic Tradition. Besides, compare cases you handle to analogous ones and seek the judgment you believe to be the most correct. Let whoever accuses another of a crime present evidence of his allegations before a fixed deadline as this is the best way to avoid suspicion and clarify facts. The Muslims can act as witnesses except those who were lashed by way of punishment, those who have borne false witness or those of doubtful integrity, for Allah knows what your hearts conceal and refuted allegations based on evidence and oaths. Beware of worry, boredom, harming parties in a dispute and refusing to admit the truth in conflicts. Allah praises and rewards those who abide by the truth at times when they should. Whoever takes his conscience into consideration, backed by good intentions, Allah shall keep him safe from harm. Whoever pretends to be what Allah knows he is not, Allah shall disgrace him. Peace be on you."

Driven by his strong urge to administer justice on every inch of the Muslims' land, `Umar ordered his governors to report to him annually during the pilgrimage. He also used to ask whoever had a complaint or a grievance to refer it to him so he would return to the oppressed his rights. Similarly, `Umar pointed out that should he learn that any of his governors oppressed someone, and did nothing to rectify this injustice, he would thus be oppressing him too. That is why `Umar appointed Muhammad Ibn Maslamah, whom he fully trusted, to look into the complaints lodged against his governors. It is noteworthy that Muhammad Ibn Maslamah did not investigate those cases secretly. Rather, he used to ask witnesses publicly and there was no way their opinions could be swayed because `Umar was a firm Caliph and because each and every subject had the right to file a complaint directly to him. He was therefore able to truly achieve man's long-sought dream of justice and freedom.

`Umar was a living example of justice and integrity, not just in the way he dealt with people, but also with his own household. Ibn `Umar states: "Abu Musa Al-Ash`areyy offered `Atikah Bint Zayd, `Umar's wife, a rug as a present. The rug was equal to an ell and a span of the hand in length. `Umar walked in on his wife and saw the rug. He asked her, 'Where did you get this?' ' 'Abu Musa Al-Ash`areyy gave it to me as a present,' answered his wife. `Umar snatched it from her and beat her with it on the head till her head shook. `Umar then said: 'Bring me Abu Musa Al-Ash`areyy and come with him.' Abu Musa was brought before `Umar, looking so exhausted. He asked: 'Why the rush, Commander of the Faithful?' `Umar returned: 'Why should you give presents to any of my wives?' He then picked up the rug and beat Abu Musa with it on the head. He next commanded him: 'Take it for we do not need it.' " (Reported by Ibn Sa`d.) May Allah rest `Umar's soul in peace. He is indeed the best example rulers could ever hope to follow.

This was best illustrated in the famous incident when his own son `Abdur-Rahmaan together with a friend of his got drunk in Egypt one night. The next morning they both regretted what they had done the night before and decided to head for the governor of Egypt, `Amr Ibn `Aas to admit their sin and ask to be punished in order to atone for what they had done. However, since `Abdur-Rahmaan was the son of the Caliph, the governor hated to defame him, and so he chose to punish him by lashing him in the patio of his own house. When `Umar learned of that, he was extremely irritated and at once wrote to `Amr Ibn `Aas reprimandingly. He also commanded him to immediately dispatch his son to Madinah. `Amr tried to explain that he had punished `Abdur-Rahmaan the same way he punished everybody else, only it was not in public. Yet, this was hardly convincing to `Umar. Once `Abdur-Rahmaan arrived at Madinah, worn-out and fatigued after the long journey, `Umar never even allowed him to rest. He immediately commanded him to be lashed again, only this time in public, thus administering justice to the letter. It is further narrated that afterwards `Abdur-Rahmaan was taken ill. Though sadly watching his son on his death bed, `Umar never for a second regretted what he did. Instead, he spoke to him saying: "If you meet my master, Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, tell him that your father administers legal punishments and observes the bounds Allah has placed on man's actions."

Muslims can only marvel at `Umar's surprising justice in another story. It is narrated that the son of `Amr Ibn `Aas once raced with with an Egyptian youth. When the latter won the race, the former was upset and therefore beat his rival and arrogantly told him: " How dare you outdo the son of the most notable parents?". The Egyptian youth thus lodged a complaint against `Amr's son to `Umar. `Umar immediately sent for `Amr Ibn `Aas and his son to come to Madinah at once. Right upon their arrival, `Umar said to the Egyptian youth: "Now beat the son of the most notable parents." Then, turning to `Amr Ibn `Aas, `Umar uttered his famous words: "How dare you enslave people who have been born free?!" It therefore appears that nothing and no one was ever able to dissuade

`Umar from administering justice, in its full and real sense.

Fourthly, among `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab's most notable achievements was his establishing a store house for flour, dates, raisins as well as various provisions for guests or for those who have lost their way. Likewise, he set down a system for supervising dealings in markets and the process of weighing goods, leaving no chance for whoever wishes to manipulate people's provisions. Moreover, whenever an orphan was brought to the Commander of the Faithful, he would allocate him a hundred *Dirhams* as well as monthly sustenance to be collected by his guardian in order to support him. His sustenance would then grow annually. `Umar also commanded that orphans should be taken good care of, and that the Treasury should pay for all the expenses of nursing and bringing them up.

Fifthly, `Umar undertook the process of establishing new cities to be inhabited by Muslims and to act as front-line bases from which to launch armies that would engage in *Jihad*. It was in the era of `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab that Al-Basrah (formerly Al-`Ailah) and Al-Kufah (formerly Al-Hairah) were established. They both came to assume much significance in Muslim history, as they pride themselves on acting as the headquarters from which massive armies were launched to conquer more and more lands and consequently stretch the scope of the Muslim state to further corners of the globe. Similarly, Al-Basrah and Al-Kufah continued to be ardently sought centres of science and other branches of knowledge for many years.

Hence, we can safely draw the conclusion that thanks to `Umar's relentless efforts and wise planning, his coming to office ushered a whole new era of civilization and progress in the entire history of Muslims, an era that took pride in the previously undreamed of degrees of justice, freedom, abundance and welfare that all Muslims deservedly basked in then.

Refuting Allegations Concerning `Umar's Deposing Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed:

Unfortunately, some books of history encompass a pack of ridiculous lies aimed at destroying the impeccable image of Al-Farooq, may Allah be pleased with him. Enemies of Islam claim that `Umar deposed Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed from the general command of the Muslim army in Syria because of feelings of animosity between the two of them or on account of some old grudge he used to bear him, and the list goes on.

However, those allegations simply do not stand to reason. If `Umar spared no effort in administering justice in the farthest ends of the Islamic diaspora, if he unhesitantly took the trouble of going out on night patrols to explore the conditions of Muslims and pulled all stops to undo whatever injustice any of his humblest subjects may have been made to suffer, how could he publicly and outspokenly commit such a flagrant act of oppression? The fact of the matter is that when `Umar deposed Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed, he had a number of very good reasons, the least of which rendered his decision absolutely justifiable.

`Umar himself did not hesitate to explain plainly the reason behind his deposing Khalid. First, he was obviously worried lest people should be enthralled by Khalid 's heroic achievements and lest he should grow self-complacent and pompous. `Umar could not envisage the entire Muslim nation hinging on the life or death of a single leader. Secondly, on account of Khalid's dauntless nature coupled with his unparalleled genius in the arts of war, it was not difficult to perceive a discernible haughtiness in him, which often lead him to take hasty decisions. Confident of his sound judgment and admirable valor, Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed, on more than one occasion, acted as though he had a free hand to handle affairs the way he thought was best. On the day Makkah was conquered, Khalid, disobeying the Prophet's explicit demand, engaged in violence. Further, it was Khalid who killed Malik Ibn Nuwayrah, though Abu Bakr had warned him not to. Moreover, driven by his excessive pride, Khalid was accused of squandering official money in the Treasury by offering too generous gifts to poets who praised him, particularly Al-Ash`ath Ibn Qais. `Umar thereupon was filled with bitter indignation and fury and therefore commanded Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed to confine the money of the Treasury to the needy and the weak.

Hence, `Umar thought it was in Muslims' best interest to depose Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed. Yet, the fact remains that there is no way `Umar's decision was motivated by any personal animosity. Further evidence is to be found in `Umar's words to Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed, when paying him his last respects. `Umar grievingly said: "May Allah have mercy on Abu Sulaymaan (i.e. Khalid), Allah's handsome reward that He shall bestow on him is far better than all the worldly pleasures he enjoyed. He was praiseworthy all his life and he died happy, too." Amazingly, `Umar never forgot Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed, not even on his own deathbed, when he was asked: "Who shall you name as your successor, Commander of the Faithful?" `Umar replied: "Had Abu `Ubaydah been still alive and had I named him then passed away and was asked by the Lord why I did, I would have answered, 'Because I heard Your Servant and Close one, peace and blessings be upon him, say: In every nation, there is an honest one and Abu `Ubaydah Ibn Al-Jarraaah is the honest one of ours. Had Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed been still alive and had I named him then passed away, and was asked by the Lord, I would have answered: 'I heard Your

Servant and Close one, peace and blessings be upon him, say: Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed is one of Allah's swords that He unsheathed to fight the disbelievers.'"

Muslims' Conquests in `Umar's Era:

Apart from all the abovementioned notable achievements of `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, the single landmark accomplishment that stands out from all the rest is his spreading Islam in provinces where idolatry and ignorance had prevailed for centuries. Though the task was indeed enormous and the challenge undertaken grave, `Umar, a man of unparalleled genius, capably handled the whole affair and was remarkably victorious.

The very day `Umar came to power, he was faced with a critical, not to mention urgent, situation that called for action. Along Abu Bakr's two-year caliphate, he continued what the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, had started. Muslim armies were sent both to Persia and Constantinople to invite people to embrace Islam. It is indeed imperative to point that that was Muslims' single goal in launching *Jihad*. Notwithstanding Muslims' peaceful intentions, the Persian and the Byzantines met them with fierce hostility and their call to the Right Path was faced by decided contempt. While Abu Bakr was on his deathbed, the political arena was going through a critical juncture. The Emperor of Syria prepared a massive army to face Muslim troops and teach them a lesson. Abu Bakr therefore had to send the necessary succor to Syria. He commanded Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed to lead some troops and rush to their brethern's aid, leaving Al-Muthannah Ibn Harithah Ash-Shibani in charge of the remaining troops in Iraq. Taking advantage of the situation, the Khosrau of Persia mobilised a huge army to deal Muslims a heavy blow and expel them from Iraq, which, for many years, had been under Persian control.

Feeling his troops were in impending jeopardy, Al-Muthannah had another man fill in for him and hurried to Madinah to seek the council of the Commander of the Faithful. In his last hours, Abu Bakr asked `Umar to call on people to join forces and head for Iraq to engage in *Jihad*.

`Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab Takes Over:

The first thing that `Umar Ibn Al-Khattab did upon his becoming the Caliph was deposing Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed from the general command of the army. `Umar appointed Abu `Ubaydah Ibn Al-Jarraaah . Further, `Umar ordered Abu `Ubaydah to send back to Iraq all soldiers who had moved to Syria earlier, in order to join the armies headed by Sa`d Ibn Abi Waqqaas in his war against the Persians. Khalid himself would remain under Abu `Ubaydah's command in Syria. With the Muslim troops preparing to launch yet another battle against the Byzantines, Abu `Ubaydah, confident of Allah's victory under the command of Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed, realized the risk he would be taking by disclosing the news of the change of the command. Driven by much laudable prudence and insights, Muslims' new leader kept the news of Khalid's deposition a secret to avoid even the slightest chance of disruption among the ranks of their troops. It is reported that twenty days after Damascus was conquered, Khalid learned the news of his deposition and asked Abu `Ubaydah: "May Allah have mercy on you! Why did you not inform us of the content of the message of the Commander of the Faithful when you received it?" Abu `Ubaydah replied: "I hated to ruin your war strategem. I am not after worldly power, nor is it worldly gains that I seek. All that we have accomplished and gained is bound to come to an end or perish. We are brothers and it never harms a man to have his brother replace him in shouldering the responsibilities of religion as well as worldly affairs." Quite an exceptional man Abu `Ubaydah Ibn Al-Jarraaah was!

Appointing him as the leader of Muslims troops only unravels \`Umar's wisdom and insight.

The Battle of Al-Yarmook:

The next day after Abu \`Ubaydah received the message of the Commander of the Faithful, Muslim troops, under the command of Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed, marched to Al-Yarmook. Fierce fighting broke out. The Byzantines fought adamantly, filled with bitter animosity towards the Arab desert-dwellers who turned their lives into a living hell. The Muslims, on the other hand, fought dauntlessly spurred by a genuine desire to achieve victory and uphold Islam. However, at a certain point, it was difficult to predict which of the two sides was to have the upper hand. In the eyes of Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed, the Muslims had but a single choice, namely to achieve victory. Otherwise, they would be running the risk of being defeated and consequently getting detached from any succor. This being the case, they displayed exemplary boldness and intrepidity that could only have been rewarded by Allah's definite victory. The Muslims' great victory at Al-Yarmook was only the beginning of a long line of triumphs in Syria.

It was then that Abu \`Ubaydah realized that it was about time he announced the news of Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed's deposition. Yet, he was torn apart, wondering how to best break the news. At that point, the news of Abu Bakr's death and \`Umar's assuming power had reached soldiers in Syria. Khalid immediately figured out that the new Caliph would never let him continue to lead the Muslim troops in war. He therefore gathered a number of his close friends, including Abu \`Ubaydah, and shared with them his worries. Abu \`Ubaydah thought the time was appropriate to disclose the secret he had been keeping. Thereupon, Khalid displayed total submission to, and acceptance of \`Umar's command, without getting furious or even feeling humiliated. He did not hesitate to command his small brigade under the general command of Abu `Ubaydah.

Abu `Ubaydah departed from Al-Yarmook meaning to head for Damascus and besiege the city. However, he learned that the garrison of Damascus were succored by troops dispatched from Hims and that large hosts of the Byzantines were gathered at Fahl in Palestine. Not knowing where to head for first, Abu `Ubaydah wrote to `Umar seeking his advice. The Commander of the Faithful wrote back saying: "Start with Damascus, Syria's stronghold and the headquarters of their kingdom and fight its people. In the meantime, keep people of Fahl busy with as many squadrons as available. Should you manage to conquer Fahl before Damascus, we would be pleased. Should you conquer Damascus first, proceed, along with your leaders, to conquer Fahl. If Allah grants you victory and when you have conquered Fahl, head afterwards for Hims along with Khalid and leave Jordan and Palestine in charge of `Amr and Sharhabeel."

Upon receiving `Umar's message, Abu `Ubaydah dispatched ten of his leaders along with their troops to Fahl, whereas he headed, together with Khaild, to Damascus leading a massive army of fearless soldiers. Damascus was a well-fortified city thanks to the large number of soldiers Heraclius had marched to from Hims. The Byzantine emperor was under the illusion that the Muslims would give in and abandon the idea of conquering Damascus. However, the Muslim troops rigorously besieged the city for a long period of time that lasted for four, six, or fourteen months, as was reported in different narrations. Now the commander of all Muslim troops in Syria, Abu `Ubaydah stationed his troops before the great gates of the city.

Damascus was then ruled by Nestas. When Muslims arrived there, Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed positioned his troops by the eastern gate and Kisan gate, Abu `Ubaydah by the great Gabiyah gate and Yazeed Ibn Abu Sufyaan by the small gate, whereas `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas and Sharhabeel Ibn Hasanah were in charge of the rest of the gates. Abu `Ubaydah also had Dhal-Kalla` at the head of an army situated between Damascus and Hims to intervene whatever succor Heraclius might send them. The Muslims besieged Damascus for seventy days. According to other books, the blockade lasted for four, six or even fourteen months. The people of Damascus adamantly refused to give in. They sent to their emperor in Hims asking for succor; yet none arrived on account of Dhal-Kalla`'s army, positioned a short distance from Damascus. When the people of Damascus realized that there was no way they would ever receive succuor, they grew weaker. Conversely, Muslims grew stronger and their blockade more rigorous.

With the advent of winter and cold weather, the situation got worse. One night a boy was born to the patriarch of Damascus. He therefore held a huge banquet to celebrate the happy occasion. The guards of the gates indulged in food and drink, celebrated and revelled all night long and fell asleep afterwards, leaving the gates unguarded. It was none other than Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed who took advantage of the situation, as he was vigilant all the time and never let any of his soldiers fall asleep. He had eyes spread all around the place to report to him day and night. When he learned of the joyous occasion they were celebrating that night and realized that guards had abandoned their positions, he set a plan. He, along with some of the intrepid Muslims, swam across the trench outside the wall. They then climbed up the wall with the aid of ropes and descended on the other side of it. The Muslim soldiers met very little resistance, as there were but a few guards, unable to get up on their feet because of the hefty meal they had. The Muslim soldiers easily killed them all and proceeded to the city gates, which they broke open.

When the people of Damascus heard the Muslims cry, " Allah is the Greatest", they were filled with terror. They then asked Muslim leaders at each gate for a reconciliation, though they had obstinately refused to give in before. The Muslims then answered their request, not knowing what Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed and his assistants had accomplished on the other side of the city. They then made their way into Damascus through all of its gates. The Muslims encountered Khalid killing residents of the city and informed him that they had signed a settlement with the city residents to spare their lives. Having conquered Damascus, the capital of the Byzantines, the way seemed paved for the triumphant Muslims to subject the entire of Syria to their command.

The Muslims wrote to the Commander of the Faithful informing him of their victory. Exulted by the good news, `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab wrote back commanding Abu `Ubaydah to pursue their conquests with a view to ridding Syria of the Byzantines and annexing it to the Muslim state. Consequently, Abu `Ubaydah and Khalid managed to conquer Fahl. Bissan readily surrendered while Tabariah was granted the settlement it requested.

The Commander of the Faithful then commanded Abu `Ubaydah to head for Hims and invade it. Abu `Ubaydah and Khalid imposed a rigorous blockade on the city, whose residents stubbornly refused to give in. They were counting on what they believed to be the soon-to-arrive succor from Heraclius. Otherwise, the Muslims, they conjectured, would not be able to endure the cold weather any longer. That is why they deliberately chose to engage in quick skirmishes on the particularly freezing cold days. However, the Byzantines were to face a tremendous disappointment. No succor arrived, nor did the Muslim army even flinch from the cold. Consequently, the siege continued to the point that some of the residents of Hims began to contemplate the possibility of signing a settlement with Muslims. This came as a shock to residents of the opposing side in Hims who were of the view that this would be a definite act of disgrace and that they should never give in to the vicious invaders. However, contrary to all expectations, the blockade came to an end thanks to the Hand of Providence. A severe earthquake hit the area pulling down the wall surrounding the city as well as houses inside. With chaos spread all around, and people of Hims panic-stricken, they desperately pleaded for a settlement. Seeing that his troops were weary and cold-stricken, Abu `Ubaydah readily signed the settlement and entered the city.

The Muslim army stayed in Hims till spring. Afterwards they thought it was high time for them to march on. Abu `Ubaydah therefore headed northwards, conquering Adistan, Hamah, Shezaar and Salamiyah, all of which surrendered to the Muslims. The Muslim troops then arrived at the port of Al-Lathiqiyah, which they managed to conquer via a clever strategem contrived by Abu `Ubaydah, thus taking its people off guard. Next, they conquered a small town called Ma`arrat Hims, which later came to be called Ma`rrat An-No`maan. Meanwhile, Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed was dispatched to invade Qinnisreen. Well-aware that the city was well-fortified, Khalid did not for a minute feel dismayed. He rather confidently went ahead and besieged the city. For a long time, people of Qinnisreen obstinately refused to respond to Khalid's repeated warnings and persisted in their stubbornness, heedless of the sad fate people in their neighbouring cities came to face. At length, realizing the futility of their adamant stance, they decided to surrender and accept the settlement. However, Khalid, a man of rigorous relentless nature, decided to punish them for resisting and so destroyed the entire city causing all residents to flee to

Antakiyah, leaving their properties, women and children to face an unknown fate.

Antakiyah was the last of the Syrian cities that Muslims had not conquered yet; and it was different from all other cities, as it was magnificent city and was constantly favored by almost all Byzantine emperors. Likewise, the vanquished remnants of their armies had fled to the city hoping to pull themselves together and deal the Muslims a heavy blow. Abu `Ubaydah marched straight to Antakiyah where fierce fighting broke out, which ended in the Muslims' favor. Abu `Ubaydah then besieged the city on all side, though not for long, as its heads soon waved their white flag and requested a settlement. Finally, Abu `Ubaydah invaded Qoros and Manbig and dispatched Khalid to invade Mar`ash, which he easily did. At that point, the Muslim conquests reached the Euphrates and the troops fighting in Syria met their counterparts in Iraq, having crushed the then world's two major powers, the Persians and the Byzantines, and introduced people outside the Arab Peninsula to the Right Path; to Islam. Hence, it was under the command of Al-Farooq, `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, that more and more people were salvaged from Hellfire and more and more people were delivered out of the darkness of ignorance to the light of Islam.

The Battles in Iraq:

With the political arena as previously described, no sooner did `Umar become the Caliph than he stepped out to urge people to join the troops and head for Iraq in order to gain Allah's reward. However, no one responded to his call, as people hated to fight the Persians who were powerful rigorous people. `Umar repeated his call the next day and again did so for the third day in a row. Al-Muthannah Ibn Harithah took the floor and eloquently spoke to Muslims of how Allah granted Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed victory and enabled him to conquer many parts of Iraq and explained that enormous booty comprising money, properties, possessions and provisions awaits Muslims there. None of the Muslims answered the call to *Jihad* on the third day though. Yet, on the fourth day, Abu `Ubayd Ibn Mas`ood Ath-Thaqafeyy was the first to volunteer and was followed by a good number of Muslims who thronged to answer `Umar's call. Though not a Companion of the Prophet, `Umar then appointed Abu `Ubayd as the leader of the troops. `Umar was asked: "why not appoint one of the Prophet's Companions instead?" He replied: "I will appoint as the leader the first to answer the call. You outdid all people in supporting the call of Islam. He was the first to answer the call." `Umar then talked to Abu `Ubayd in person and advised him to fear Allah and to take good care of the Muslim troops he was in charge of. He also ordered him to seek the counsel of the Prophet's Companions as well as Sulayṯ Ibn Qays as he was well-versed in warfare.

`Umar sent a message to Abu `Ubaydah commanding him to send back to Iraq Muslim soldiers whom Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed had marched to Syria to aid the troops there. As a result, he sent back ten thousand Muslim soldiers to join their fellow Muslims in Iraq. At the time, when the Muslim troops arrived in Iraq, the Persians were divided over their sovereign. They finally agreed to crown Buran, daughter of Khosrau, who, in turn, entrusted a man called Rostom with all the kingdom's affairs, including the war they were engaged in against Muslims.

The Battle of the Bridge:

Rostom mobilized a huge army, which set out to meet the Muslims. The Persians stood facing the Muslim army, separated only by a river across which a bridge was built. It was Abu `Ubayd's dauntless idea that the Muslims cross the river because, he thought, the atheist Persians could never be more fearless of death than the steadfast Muslims. Abu `Ubayd even had the bridge destroyed so that victory would be the Muslims' only choice.

The Muslims obeyed the command of their ruler, crossed the river and engaged in ferocious fighting against ten thousand Persian soldiers who rode elephants with bells hung around their necks. The Muslim horses were intimidated by the Persian elephants and the chimes of their bells, and the Muslim army were being targeted at by the arrows of the Persians. Nonetheless, they managed to kill six thousand of their atheist enemies. Abu `Ubayd ordered the Muslims to focus on killing the elephants first; so they killed almost all of the Persian elephants. The Persians had brought along to the battlefield a big white elephant. Abu `Ubayd stepped forward and chopped off its trunk. Enraged and furious, the elephant killed Abu `Ubayd and stepped on him. A long line of successors he had named before the battle were killed, too. Finally, Al-Muthannah Ibn H̲arithah became in charge of the troops, as was planned by Abu `Ubayd. Just as the Muslims were about to conquer their enemies and declare themselves to be victorious, frailty got the better of them and they showed their heels. The Persians hurried in their pursuit killing many of them. The situation was, in every sense, grave. The Muslims had no choice but to reconstruct the bridge and cross the Euphrates. Al-Muthannah stood by the bridge and addressed his troops saying: "O people, take your time. I will wait here by the bridge till everyone has crossed the river." So when everyone did, Al-Muthannah led his troops till they reached their first stop. He stayed up all night, along with some intrepid Muslims to guard his soldiers, many of whom were seriously wounded. Others chose to wander aimlessly in the wilderness. Others yet, panic-stricken as they were, headed straight for Madinah to break the news to the Commander of the Faithful. `Umar however did not reproach the defeated Muslims for retreating and explained: "I am your troops (that you can retreat to), in accordance with Allah's verse:

"وَمَن يُوَلِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ دُبُرَهُ إِلاَّ مُتَحَرِّفاً لِّقِتَالٍ أَوْ مُتَحَيِّزاً إِلَى فِئَةٍ فَقَدْ بَاء بِغَضَبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَمَأْوَاهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ." (الأنفال: ١٦)

"If any do turn his back to them on such a day unless it be in a stratagem of war, or to retreat to a troop (of his own) he draws on himself the wrath of Allah, and his abode is Hell, an evil refuge (indeed)!" (Al-Anfaal: 16)

This battle is reported to have taken place in Sha`baan, 13 AH, 40 days after the battle of Al-Yarmook.

The Battle of Al-Qadissiyah:

With the beginning of the year 14 AH, conditions in Iraq were hardly favourable after the Muslims' sad defeat. The non-Muslims there violated every agreement they had concluded with the Muslims, abused them and expelled their governors. Deeply aggrieved, `Umar, at the helm of a huge army, marched out of Madinah with the intention of conquering Iraq himself. He consulted the Prophet's Companions and they all approved of his plans with the exception of `Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn `Awf who pointed: "I am afraid that frailty may set in throughout the Muslim state. I think you should dispatch someone and go back to Madinah." `Umar as well as all Muslims present saw the point in `Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn `Awf's opinion. `Umar thus asked: "Who do you think we ought to dispatch?" He replied," I know someone." `Umar asked, "Who?" `Abdur-Rahmaan returned: "A true dauntless lion, Sa`d Ibn Malik Az-Zuharyy." `Umar approved of `Abdur-Rahmaan's choice and did dispatch Sa`d. He appointed him as leader of the troops that headed for Iraq and advised him saying: "O Sa`d Ibn Wuhayb, do not be deceived by whoever claims to be the Prophet's next of kin or Companion. It takes a good deed to wipe out a sin, not a sin of its like. Obedience (of Allah's commands) is the only criterion whereby Allah favours one over the other. The lofty and the humble are both equal in the eyes of Allah. He is their Lord and they are His servants. It is on account of good health that one is favoured to the other, and it is through obedience that they attain Allah's reward. Abide by whatever the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, always adhered to since the Qur'an was first revealed unto him till the day he died, for that would be the Right Path. This is my advice to you. Should you abandon it, fruitless will be your work, and in the Hereafter you will be in the ranks of those who have lost (all spiritual good)." Right before Sa`d departed, `Umar addressed him, on the outskirts of Madinah, saying: "You are about to undertake an enormous responsibility. So do have patience when faced with calamities, as this will nurture feelings of fear of Allah. Remember that fear of Allah resides in two things: obeying His commands and refraining from sin. Those who obey Him abstain from worldly pleasures and pursue the reward of the Hereafter, while those that disobey Him pursue worldly pleasures and renounce the reward of the Hereafter. Allah has endowed hearts with truths; some secret and others known. Known truths are manifested when one treats those who praise and those who lash him equally. Secret truths, on the other hand, are unraveled when wisdom finds its way from one's heart to one's tongue. They are displayed through, and as a result of the love of people. So do not forsake the love of people. Even Prophets did seek people's love. Whenever Allah is pleased with someone, He causes people to love him and whenever Allah is displeased with someone, He causes people to loathe him. So think of people's feelings towards you as a sign of whether Allah is pleased with you or you."

`Umar then headed back to Madinah, whereas Sa`d made his way to Iraq. However, when he was only a short distance from joining Al-Muthannah Ibn Harithah, the latter passed away. So when Sa`d arrived in Iraq, the entire army was under his command. `Umar next sent him additional troops. Hence, Sa`d was at the helm of some thirty thousand soldiers, or thirty six according to another narration, ready to engage in the famous battle of Al-Qadissiyah.

It is noteworthy that though Madinah, where `Umar resided, and Iraq, where the battle took place, were in fact thousands of miles apart, `Umar was practically in constant contact with the leader of Muslim troops. Al-Qadissiyah was regarded as the gate to the whole of Persia in those days, hence comes the special significance of that battle in particular. `Umar sent a message to Sa`d asking him to wage war against the Persians. He advised him to position his troops between urban and nomadic areas, to launch the attack first and not to be intimidated by their multitudes for they were a nation of deception. `Umar further advised him to hold himself accountable for all he does and to offer his army sound counselling. Moreover, `Umar asked the leader of his troops to report to him all that takes place in detail. `Umar wished to be able to visualize the whole arena. Sa`d therefore wrote him describing the surrounding landscape so that `Umar was truly able to picture it in his mind. He also informed him that the Persians had selected Rostom and the likes of him to lead the enemy troops.

When Sa`d stationed Muslim troops at Al-Qadissiyah, he learnt that Rostom was to lead the Persian army in war, that amounted to eighty thousand or a hundred and twenty thousand soldiers, followed by another eighty thousand along with thirty three elephants. Nonetheless, the Commander of the Faithful wrote to Sa`d reassuringly and said: "Do not be troubled by whatever you learn about them or whatever they prepare for war. Seek the Lord's aid and depend solely on Him. Send over to Rostom men of wisdom and sound judgment to invite him to embrace Islam. Calling unto them only causes them to grow weaker. Report to me daily."

In the enemies camp, though, the situation was not as promising as it looked. Rostom was not too eager to battle with Muslims. Things did not bode well. The Persian army leader was a man who believed in the power of and was well-versed in the stars. Besides, he dreamed that an angel descended from heaven, sealed the Persians' sword then handed it to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, who, in turn, handed it to `Umar. Rostom therefore did not think they had much of a chance. That is why he kept postponing attacking the Muslims, hoping Sa`d would be bored and decide to depart for he was confident victory would not be on their side that time.

When the two armies stood face-to-face, Rostom asked Sa`d to send him a wise, learned man so he could ask him a few questions. Sa`d sent him Al-Mugheerah Ibn Shu`bah, may Allah be pleased with him, who eloquently spoke of Islam and brilliantly explained their purpose. Rostom could not but admire his words and agree with all he said. However, when Rostom conferred with his chiefs, they disdainfully refused to embrace Islam and arrogantly insisted on going into battle against Muslims. Sa`d then sent the Persians more and more messengers to call unto them to listen to the voice of reason and be guided to the Right Path, yet all to no avail. The Persians were totally blinded by their own obstinacy and arrogance.

It was therefore crystal clear to both sides that war was the only option they had left. The battle of Al-Qadissiyah was, in every sense, the most serious and certainly most significant of the Muslims' battle in Iraq. Incapacitated by an overwhelming illness, Sa`d Ibn Abi Waqqaas, may Allah be pleased with him, was unfortunately unable to join the Muslim army in the battlefield. Nonetheless, he contemplated the Muslims' affairs in his residence leaving his door wide open, absolutely heedless of the Persians who could have butchered him in a second, had Muslims showed the heels. Thus, malady failed to have the upper hand over Sa`d's courage and bravery at a time when they were both most desperately needed. Ibn Ishaq maintains that the Muslim army was between seven thousand and eight thousand in number, whereas Rostom was at the helm of an army of sixty thousand soldiers. Sa`d led Muslims in the noon prayer, and then delivered a sermon in which he urged his troops to fight dauntlessly. He then recited Allah's words:

"وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُورِ مِن بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ أَنَّ الأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ."

(الأنبياء: ١٠٥)

"Before this we wrote in the Psalms, after the Message (given to Moses): my servants the righteous, shall inherit the earth." (Al-Anbiyaa':105)

He then recited all verses of *Jihad* to spur Muslims. Sa`d cried at the top of his voice, "Allah is the Greatest" once, twice, three times, and at the fourth cry, war broke out. Fierce fighting continued for four days in a row during which Arabian horses were intimidated by Persian elephants. However, the Companions of the Prophet heroically managed to kill the elephants and gouge out their eyes. Further, Divine Providence backed Muslims' admirable intrepidity. At sunset, a violent storm blew plucking up the tents of the Persians. Rostom thereupon jumped on his riding animal and fled. However, the Muslims pursued him and took his life. The death of Rostom pulled the curtain down on the battle of Al-Qadissiyah, in which

Muslims were deservedly victorious. Muslims then marched straight to the city of Al-Madaa'in, where the estrade of the Khosrau was. The booty Muslims collected after this battle was incredibly enormous. One fifth of it was sent to the Commander of the Faithful.

Eaten up with worry and apprehension, `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him, used to stand outside Madinah and ask travellers about the battle taking place at Al-Qadissiyah. While standing there one day, `Umar spotted a traveller on his riding animal waving from afar. When `Umar asked him about the battle, the man replied: " Allah has granted Muslims victory and they collected unimaginable booty." The man continued to talk not knowing who he was speaking to, and `Umar kept walking next to the man's riding animal. When they approached Madinah, people saluted `Umar addressing him as the Commander of the Faithful. Only then did he realize that he was talking to the Caliph. So he said: "May Allah have Mercy on you, Commander of the Faithful! Why did you not tell me you are the Caliph?" `Umar replied, "That is all right, brother."

The battle of Al-Qadissiyah was of considerable repercussions across the Arab Peninsula. Many Arabs were filled with anticipation and apprehension as fighting flared between Muslims and Persians since the survival or downfall of their kingdoms hinged on the destiny of the Persian empire. Hence, each city dispatched people to bring them news of the battle. Yet, when the Muslims became victorious, the jinns were the first to break the news even to the furthest corners of the Arab lands.

Lured by the victory they strove to attain, Muslims pursued the remaining vanquished Persians eastwards. They were convinced that their atheist enemies were no stronger than a bleeding lion licking his wounds, and no longer able to put up any resistance. They therefore sought to finish the job by crushing them once and for all. They thus conquered the Persian capital, Al-Madaa'in, after a battle between the two armies. Seeing that his army was dealt one heavy blow after the other, the Persian King, Khosrau Yazdagird, fled the city. His estrade was turned into a small mosque wherein Allah was praised and glorified.

After the Persian capital had been conquered and annexed to the Muslim state, `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab felt there was no need for Muslims to proceed with fighting as the borders between the Muslims and the Persians were then fully secured and there was nothing for the former to fear anymore. However, in the eyes of the Persians, they had lost the battle, but the war was far from being over. They were full of rage and felt humiliated at having been brought to their knees by some desert-dwellers who drowned in a sea of ignorance. They were simply clueless as to how such rough-hewn, coarse beings managed to conquer a nation such as themselves, so civilised and advanced. Filled with bitter indignation, they were determined to retrieve what they had lost to the Arabs whom they loathed. What the Persians were not aware of was that the enemies they fought against were not the same ignorant wild Arabs who sank in chaos and lawlessness. They did not know that they were up against people who believed in One God, Whom they worshipped solely with all devotion. Their waywardness and ignorance were replaced with steadfast faith and refined manners. Their hearts were imbued with the moral principles of altruism, sacrifice, straightforwardness and renunciation of worldly gains. The Persians did not know they were crossing swords with dauntless warriors who would engage in fighting seeking none but either of two goals: victory or martyrdom. They were not conscious of the fact that Muslims were under the command of a pious Caliph whose heart was filled with fear of Allah and who, unlike their haughty rulers, viewed himself as a humble servant of his Lord, whose job was to spread Islam and invite more and more people to worship the One Creator. There was probably no worse enemy they could ever have fought.

The battle of Al-Qadissiyah was followed by another at Galoolaa', a small town near Baghdad, wherein the Muslims were again victorious. The Persians were again grieviously defeated at Nahawand, another town south of Hamadan. This particular battle is known in history as "the mother of conquests", since it led to the conquering of the entire of Persia later on and to Muslims' capturing of Khosrau's treasures. The battle of Nahawand took place in the year 21 AH.

At that point, the Commander of the Faithful thought the Muslim state had expanded to incorporate lands and nations that were previously soaked in atheistism and ignorance thanks to the series of battles they fought and won. With the sun of Islam now beaming down on the Arab Peninsula, in Syria and Iraq, `Umar was of the view that Muslims ought to end wars and focus on securing the lands they conquered. He believed that Muslims no longer had reason to worry about Islam. They managed to guard themselves against the Persians. Besides, the two cities, Al-Basrah and Al-Kufah, which Muslims populated offered an invaluable service to the then budding Muslim state. They provided protection to conquered lands behind them and a succor to those in front. Nonetheless, thw Muslims' problems were not over yet. The Persian Khosrau was literally a thorn in the flesh. He was constantly fleeing from one city to another as Muslims proceeded to conquer Persian cities, every time gathering masses to fight the Muslims hoping to put an end to the worst nightmare of his life. In short, Yazdagird was a pathetic source of nuisance that Muslims hardly had time for.

Further, the two young cities,Al-Basrah and Al-Kufah, had ambitions of their own. They wished to expand their terrains to include neighbouring provinces by launching more battles and gaining more booty, hence improving their conditions. It was Al-Ahnaf Ibn Qais who suggested to the Caliph waging war against the Persians in the hearts of Khurasaan and cornering Yazdagird. When `Umar granted his permission, Muslims fearlessly conquered one Persian city right after the other to the point that the Persian Khosrau had no choice but to cross the river *and seek refuge in Turkistaan. Though the King of Turkistaan mobilized a massive army to back the remnants of the vanquished Persian army, the Muslims displayed such valor that baffled the enemy and rendered them unable to achieve the goal they were gathered to see through. That chapter drew down the curtain on the Persian empire, one of the two world powers then. The entire Persian empire was conquered by people who would worshipped none but their Sole Creator, Allah, Exalted be He. It was therefore during the reign of `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab that the downfall of the Persian empire took place. It is noteworthy that Yazdagird finally gave in to the fact that the days of his past glory were irretrievably over. He spent the rest of his life expatriated till he was killed by one of his compatriots during the caliphate of `Uthmaan Ibn `Affaan. Abu Hurayrah narrates: "The Prophet said: "Khosrau will be ruined, and there will be no Khosrau after him, and Caesar will surely be ruined and there will be no Caesar after him, and you will spend their treasures in Allah's Cause." (Reported by Al-Bukhari and Moslem.)

The Conquest of Jerusalem:

While `Ubaydah Ibn Al-Jarraaah and Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed were marching northwards in Syria, `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas along with Sharhabeel Ibn Hasannah were heading for Palestine with a view to liberating Jerusalem from the hands of the

Byzantines. When they reached Ramlah, they were encountered by a host of Byzantines, led by Utrabone (Tribunus), the shrewdest, most cunning and most ruthless commander who was second in rank after Heraclius. He had stationed massive armies at both Ramlah and Ilia'a (Jerusalem) so they could all be under his unified command.

He similarly stationed a garrison at each of Ghazza, Al-Lid, Nablus, Jafa and Sabastiah. Having set the scene as such, Tribunus eagerly awaited Muslims' arrival so as to bring them to their knees and take vengeance on them for what they did to them in Syria.

Being the subtle army commander that he was, `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas realised the jeopardy of the situation he was up against. He knew that victory would certainly be difficult if Muslims plunged into war with the situation being the way it was. He therefore felt the need to consult the Commander of the Faithful and brief him on the precarious conditions he was faced with. `Umar then dispatched Mu`aweyiah Ibn Abi Sufyaan to Qaysariah and wrote him saying: "I have appointed you to conquer Qaysariah, so march to it, and supplicate to Allah to grant you victory and always repeat the words: There is no power nor strength save in Allah, the Sublime, the Supreme. Allah is our God , in Whom we place our trust, on Whom we pin our hope; He is our Lord. Allah is the best to protect and the best to help."

Mu`aweyiah Ibn Abi Sufyaan headed for Qaysariah, besieged it and scuffled with its people several times, during one of which they engaged in fierce fighting till Allah granted His servants victory over their enemies. He killed nearly a hundred thousand of them and sent one-fifth of the booty to `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him. The fall of Qaysariah meant that Tribunus could no longer hope for succour in times of distress.

Shortly afterward, `Amr received the news that Tribunus was marching with his troops towards Agnadeen. `Amr was every bit as shrewd as Tribunus. He had two of his commanders, along with their troops, head for Ilia'a and Ramlah to distract the enemies garrison there and keep them busy so they would not be able to leave their places. At that point, `Amr wrote to the Commander of the Faithful asking for succor. He wrote `Umar informing him of the situation. When the Caliph read `Amr's message, he smiled and said to those around him: "Tribunus of the Byzantines is going to be attacked by Tribunus of the Arabs (i.e. `Amr); so wait and see how things will turn out." Succour was dispatched right away. However, the city of Agnadeen was practically invisible. `Amr realised that he would have to resort to some artful contrivance on his part. Disguised as a messenger of Muslims' army commander, he went to meet Tribunus. He talked to him, heard what he had to say, took a good look at the place and found out what he needed to know. Tribunus thought to himself: " I swear that this is `Amr or the man whose opinion `Amr follows. Nothing would be better than to kill them." Tribunus thereupon called one of his guards and whispered to him to ambush the messenger and kill him. Figuring out the trick, `Amr therefore told him: "O Prince, you listened to me and I listened to you. I am only one of ten men whom `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab sent to accompany this commander in all he does. I would love to bring them all here to listen to you and see what I did." Tribunus returned: " All right, go bring them to me." He then called another of his guards and whispered to him to hurry to the first and bring him back. `Amr therefore made it back safely to his troops. When Tribunus learnt that he really was `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas, he said: "The man duped me! I swear that he is certainly the shrewdest of all Arabs!" When `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab learnt of this contrivance, he wondered: "What an excellent man you are, `Amr!" Ferocious fighting flared in Agnadeen and both sides suffered heavy casualties. Victory at Agnadeen spurred Muslims to march on to Jerusalem, which they besieged for a very longtime, after having made sure no assault was to be expected from the rear. However, Jerusalem was a city to be reckoned with and the blockade lasted for a long period of time. Tribunus then wrote to `Amr saying: "You are my friend and my counterpart, you enjoy among your people the same rank that I do among mine. I swear you shall not conquer any further of Palestine after Agnadeen. So go back and do not grow arrogant lest you should be defeated the way those who came before you were." `Amr called a man who spoke the language of the Byzantines, sent him to Tribunus and asked him to listen to what Tribunus told him then convey it to him. `Amr then wrote Tribunus a message wherein he said: "I received your message and you are my counterpart and enjoy an equal rank as mine among your people. You know that I am the conqueror of these lands. Read this messeng of mine out loud before your ministers and escort." So when Tribunus received the message, he gathered all his ministers and read it to them publicly. They asked Tribunus: "How do you know he is not the conqueror of these lands? He answered: " The name of the conqueror is all three letters." (The name '`Umar' in Arabic is made up of three letters.)`Amr's messenger returned to him with Tribunus' reply so `Amr wrote to `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab saying: " I am tackling an insurmountable thwarting war and facing a territory that seems to be preserved for you. So what shall be your command?"

According to Ibn Katheer: Jerusalem adamantly refused to give in to the blockade for a long time. Eventually, they agreed to conclude a peace settlements with Muslims provided that the Commander of the Faithful comes to the city in person. When `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab learned of their request, he consulted Muslims as to whether it would be a good idea for him to head for Jerusalem. `Uthmaan Ibn `Affaan was of the view that the Caliph should not do so in order to demean them and force them to give in. Conversely, `Ali Ibn Abi Taalib advised him to head for Jerusalem as this would boost Muslims' morale who had rigorously besieged the city. `Umar was inclined to follow `Ali's opinion. That was why he appointed him to be in charge of Madinah while he was away and set out for Jerusalem, accompanied by Al-`Abbaas Ibn `Abdul Mutalib. `Umar chose to travel on horseback so as to cover the distance at a faster pace. When he arrived at Al-Gabiah, he gave a long eloquent sermon to Muslim troops. Having struck a peace settlement with people at Al-Gabiah, `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab headed for Jerusalem. He had earlier sent messages to army commanders asking them to meet him at Al-Gabiah on a specified day. On the appointed day , the army commanders did head for Al-Gabiah, one after the other to meet the Commander of the Faithful. Yazeed Ibn Abi Sufyaan was the first to arrive. He was followed by Abu `Ubaydah and then Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed. It is narrated that when Abu `Ubaydah received `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab upon the latter's arrival, he dismounted. Thereupon, `Umar dismounted, too. Abu `Ubaydah was about to kiss `Umar's hand, so `Umar prepared to kiss Abu `Ubaydah 's foot. Abu `Ubaydah had to stop and so `Umar stopped.

Later, all commanders arrived to see `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab with the exception of Sharhabeel Ibn Hasannah and `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas who were on the alert at Agnadeen. While `Umar was at Al-Gabiah, an army of Byzantine soldiers, with their swords drawn in their hands, arrived. Armed and fully prepared, Muslims immediately set out to confront them. `Umar pointed:" These are people who came seeking peace." The Muslim army marched towards them, only to realise that they were soldiers from Jerusalem who came asking to be granted security and reconciliation when they learnt that `Umar

Ibn Al-Khattaab had arrived. The Commander of the Faithful, may Allah be pleased with them, granted them what they requested, signed a security and reconciliation settlement, imposed on them the *Jiziah*, and set a few conditions mentioned in books of history. Tribunus had no choice therefore but to flee to Egypt, where he stayed till it was conquered at the hands of `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas as will be explained shortly.

The news of the peace settlement that people of Jerusalem struck with the Commander of the Faithful was quick to reach people of Ramlah. They therefore did their best to conclude a similar agreement, and eventually succeeded in gaining one. All towns and cities in Palestine were then to follow suit until the entire of Palestine was conquered.

Having accomplished the mission for which he came, `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab then thought of visiting Jerusalem. Therefore, one morning, `Umar, accompanied by `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas and Sharhabeel Ibn Hasannah, left Al-Gabiah for Jerusalem. Upon his arrival, `Umar was received by the city's Bishop and key figures. The Commander of the Faithful treated them cordially and spoke to them kindly that they were all amazed at the humbleness and tolerance of the Commander of a nation that brought them all to their knees. It set their minds and hearts at ease to see how he was a living example of justice, which they were not at all used to all the years they were under the tyrannical rule of the oppressive Byzantines during the reign of Heraclius. They were reassured that he would honour the peace settlement they signed with him. At the end of the day, they asked permission to leave promising to come back the next morning to take the Commander of the Faithful for a tour in the city. `Umar was waiting to be alone to kneel down in prostration before Allah in utter gratitude for the invaluable Grace He bestowed on him, namely conquering Jerusalem, the city of Al-Aqsa mosque. He was delighted to be second to none but the Prophet, peace and blessing be upon him, to pray in the Al-Aqsa mosque. `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, not Abu Bakr, was granted that honour. He was overjoyed at having entered Jerusalem without shedding blood. He was also thrilled to walk into the city and be so warmly received by people who did not see in him a tyrannical conqueror, but a peace-lover who freed them from the hateful grip on the Byzantines.

The next morning, the Bishop did come to take the Commander of the Faithful on a sightseeing tour in the city. He walked in Al-Aqsa mosque from the same door wherefrom the Prophet entered on the night of the Night Journey (*Israa'*). It is reported that upon his entering the mosque, `Umar repeated the *Talbiyah*[2] and that he offered the salutational prayer at David's niche, then led Muslims in the noon prayer the next day. He then asked the Bishop to locate to him the Rock. He next asked him where he thought he should build the mosque. The Bishop suggested that he build it behind the Rock. `Umar however refused the idea explaining that he would be thus imitating the Jews. Instead he had the mosque erected in front of Al-Aqsa mosque. This mosque is presently known as the `Umari mosque. `Umar then began to wipe the garbage off the Rock, carrying it in his own garment. Muslims immediately joined him. Before `Umar's departure, he assigned to people of Jordan the task of cleaning the Rock. When Christians ruled Jerusalem three hundred years before the advent of Islam, they turned the Rock into a waste tip because the Jews had dumped garbage at the place where Jesus's lookalike was crucified. It is narrated that the Romans cleared the place and built a huge church there instead. On his tour in Jerusalem, and while `Umar was at Al-Qiamah church, noon prayer was due. So the Bishop asked `Umar if he could offer his prayer in the church, being a house of Allah's, too. However, `Umar politely declined the offer on the grounds that should he pray in the church, Muslims later on may take it as a commendable tradition, and end up therefore expelling Christians from their churches, an unpardonable violation of the Pledge of Security Muslims had concluded with them. This episode is indeed a memorable one in history, as it brings into the spotlight one of the most significant features of Islam, namely tolerance. There is no way Muslims who abide by the true spirit of Islam and stick to its real essence, could ever persecute non-Muslims. Muslims beyond all doubt believe in Judaism and Christianity, being two heavenly religions revealed prior to Islam. `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab's stance on that day refutes all vicious allegations that claim that Islam spread by force or coercion. The one slogan that Islam uphold since day one is freedom of faith: each is entitled to embrace whatever religion he wishes. The call to Islam and the worship of Allah should be made with wisdom and good exhortation.

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[2] Saying: Here I come upon your calling, O Lord, here I come.

Apart from that, the visit of `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab to Jerusalem abounds in lessons for Muslims to learn and particularly for rulers to contemplate. It is reported that `Umar set out for Al-Gabiah along the route of Iliaa' riding a large-humped camel, with his head exposed to the sun, with no cap or hood to protect it, and with his two legs hanging down with no stirups. His saddle was a piece of wool, which he used for a saddle for riding, and for a bed at night. His bag was actually a piece of cloth filled with fiber. He also used it as a pillow when asleep. He wore a garment that was torn at the sides. `Umar said: "Call the chief of the people." So they called the Al-Jaloomas. He then ordered: "Wash my garment, sew it and lend me another." He was brought a linen garment. He asked, "What is this?" He was answered, "Linen." He again asked, "What is linen?" When they explained to him, `Umar took off his garment. It was then washed and patched. When they gave it back to him, he took off their garment and put on his. Al-Jaloomas told him: " You are the King of the Arabs. Camels are not fit for this country. Should you wear something else and ride a workhorse, you would be more respected by the Romans." `Umar replied: "We are people whom Allah has honoured by Islam. So we seek nothing instead of Allah's Satisfaction." He was brought a workhorse, on which he placed a piece of cloth with no saddle and rode it. He immediately cried: " Stop it! Stop it! I never knew people could ride the devil before today." He then asked for his camel to be brought and mounted it.

It is reported that in the *Jahiliah* (i.e. the pre-Islamic era) `Umar headed for Syria among the group of merchants from Quraish. When they departed, he was late on account of some business he had to take care of. While he was still in the city, a patriarch grappled with him. `Umar tried to resist him but could not. The patriarch pushed `Umar into a house where there was a pile of earth, an ax, a shovel and a scuttle. He then commanded him, "Take this (pile) from here to there." The man then closed the door and left, and was not back before midday. `Umar recounts: "I sat down pensive and did nothing of what he told me to do. When he returned, he asked me why I did not do as he ordered me to. He then punched me in the head. I picked up the shovel, hit him with it and killed him. I then wandered aimlessly till I arrived at a monk's monastery and stayed by it since the evening of that day. When the monk spotted me, he came down and let me in. He offered me food, drink and was generous to me. The man kept staring at me and asking me questions. I told him: 'I lost track of my friends.' He returned: 'Your eyes are full of fear.' He continued to gaze at me. He then said: 'Christians are well aware that I am the most well-versed in their Holy Book and I can foresee that it will be you who will drive us out of our land. So will you sign me an agreement granting this monastery of mine security?' I rejoined: 'Oh, no! This is absurd.' Yet, the monk insisted till I did sign him the security agreement he asked for. When it was time for me to leave, he gave me a donkey and said: 'Ride it. When you join your friends, send it back to me on its own, as every monastery it passes by will be kind to it.' I did as he asked me to." Later, when `Umar came to conquer Jerusalem, the monk came to meet him while he was still at Al-Gabiah and brought him the peace agreement. `Umar thereupon signed it for him, on the condition that he shows hospitality to all Muslims who passed him by, and guide them along the way. (Reported by Ibn `Aasaakir and others.)

Having accomplished the goal for which he came, `Umar saw no reason why he should stay any longer. He therefore headed back home. Since good news travels fast, the glad tidings of Muslims' victory in Syria and Palestine flew rapidly to Madinah, where people were overjoyed. They therefore went out and awaited the safe return of `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab outside Madinah. When the Caliph reached the capital of the Muslim state, he was warmly received by his fellow brothers in Islam who were all full of admiration for a man who went out of his way and spared no effort to spread Islam and clear the earth of vicious idolatry and atheism.

The Conquest of Egypt:

Having conquered Palestine and signed a peace settlement with people there, `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas started to toy with the idea of invading Egypt. He foresaw the danger in Tribunus' seeking shelter in the Nile Valley after being chased from Palestine. He realised that he would be safe in Egypt whose fertile land and abundant resources would stand as a natural barrier against any invasion. `Amr therefore wished to immediately pursue Tribunus so as not to give an opportunity to mobilize an army and reinforce his position. Moreover, `Amr did not think Egyptians would pose any difficulty since they were embittered by the oppression of the Byzantines who exploited the country's natural resources leaving Egyptians nothing but bare subsistence wages in return for their toil on the land. It was right after the conquest of Jerusalem in 16 AH that `Amr first talked to `Umar about the idea. Though `Umar listened carefully to what `Amr had to say, he simply was not quite comfortable with the idea of engaging in such a tremendous task at that point for a number of reasons. First and foremost, up till 17 AH, the policy of the Commander of the Faithful was that conquests should not transcend the Arab world and that since Muslims had conquered the entire of Syria and Iraq and annexed them to the Arab Peninsula, that was sufficient to secure their northern and eastern borders and grant the budding Muslim state more strength. Secondly, towards the end of the year 18 AH, the entire Arabia was struck by a serious famine threatening all Muslims with extinction. This was a famous year in Muslim history, known as the Ramadah Year. At that point, `Umar had nothing on his mind but relieving the pain of the starving Muslims. The thought of invading new territories and waging war against the Byzantines was simply so ill-timed and ill-advised, too, as Muslim troops could not hope for succor if they ever needed any. Thirdly, once the famine in Arabia began to abate, people in Palestine were inflicted by a severe plague, which, unfortunately spread to Syria and Iraq and posed a real threat to Muslims' security. Under such critical circumstances, one is not to be surprised that the conquest of Egypt was not on `Umar's agenda. During this rather turbulent period of time, `Amr his plans kept to himself and awaited when a good opportunity offered itself to effect them. It was only when the famine in Arabia ended and the plague in Syria abated that he thought the issue could be discussed afresh. `Umar went on a visit to Syria to recondition its affairs and reconstruct its armies. `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas received him at Al-Gabiah and accompanied him along his tour. He kept talking incessantly to the Caliph and pulled all stops to convince him of the importance of invading Egypt. At last, `Umar was convinced. However, he did not issue him a command to march to Egypt straightaway, but rather asked him to wait till he sent him a message after his return to Madinah giving him the green light to proceed.

Back in Madinah, `Umar, now convinced of `Amr's sound view, sent him a message with Shurayk Ibn `Abdah, wherein he commanded him to gather massings of fighters and march to Egypt. `Amr received the message of the Commander of the Faithful while blockading Qaysariah. He therefore deputied Mu`aweyiah Ibn Abi Sufyaan to take over and continue the blockade. Thrilled by the news, `Amr immediately fell to mobilising a huge army of about four thousand soldiers and marched straight to Egypt. He further sent `Umar's messenger back to Madinah asking for succor both for Muslim troops in Syria and those heading for Egypt.

`Amr chose to take the coastal route to `Areesh, hoping that succor would be soon to arrive and would join his troops. He was however worried lest `Umar should lend an ear to adverse opinions who were against the conquest of Egypt and be thus dissuaded from the whole plan and end up commanding him to retreat. That was more or less what took place. As a result, the Caliph sent`Amr a message saying: "If you receive this message of mine before entering the territories of Egypt, turn back to your previous post. If you have already arrived, march on and I will send you succor." However, when `Umar's messenger arrived, `Amr resorted to a manoeuvre so as not to receive the message before reaching a village between Rafah and `Areesh, which is located in Egypt. It was there that `Amr stationed his troops and broke to his soldiers the content of the Caliph's message. He informed them that they were to proceed with their plans. That officially marked the beginning of the conquest of Egypt.

The Muslim army simply managed to capture `Areesh as it was defenceless. `Amr then marched with his troops southwards taking the same route that the Persians had taken twenty five years before that day to occupy Egypt and enslave its people. It was not before the army reached Al-Farama that they were to encounter any resistance. The news of Muslims' entering the Egyptian territories was not kept a secret from the Byzantines. They had anticipated some act of aggression on the part of those desert-dwellers. However, they were well-aware of the fact that they were the ablest people to fight in the desert and that it would hardly be a good idea to engage in war against them in the Egyptian desert.

The Byzantines did not think `Areesh would be a good ignition point to start war from since it was so close to Palestine where Muslims could easily get succor in case they needed it. Al-Farama was chosen instead to be the first place to engage in fighting. Nonetheless, Al-Muqawqis, the governor of Egypt, as well as Tribunus, the Byzantine commander who had fled earlier from Jerusalem, dared not join fighters at Al-Farama. The army of Muslims was quite small in number compared to the huge massings of Byzantines fighters. The Byzantines therefore pompously thought they would easily outnumber their enemies and bring them to their knees. However, they were not aware of the fact that Muslim fighters, unlike any others, were never intimidated by huge armies and that they went to battlefield spurred by steadfast faith and a a never-failing desire to spread Islam throughout the world. Hence, in their eyes, massive armies were hardly different from a small battalion.

Muslims imposed a rigorous blockade on the castles of the Byzantines, who nevertheless refused to give in. `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas realized that war was their only option. He addressed his troops to enkindle their enthusiasm reminding them of their past victories and asserting that whenever they fought for the cause of Allah, He was certainly on their side, supporting them and granting them triumph. Muslims thereupon voiced the cry of war : "Allah is the Greatest" and galloped towards the castle where a ferocious battle took place between the two armies, ending with the pathetic defeat of the Byzantines. Muslims seized their castles and later used them as fortresses in their wars.

Though many fighters were lost in Al-Farama battle, the Bedouins living on the borders of the Egyptian eastern desert joined Muslim troops thus making up for the martyrs. `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas then resumed the march, as he headed southwards capturing along the way Magdal and Al-Qassasseen, with hardly any resistance. He next made way to Bilbais, where a significant battle was to break out. The city of Bilbais was situated 35 miles from another city, Misr, with its well-fortified castles. Tribunus mobilized nearly twelve thousand well-equipped fighters and so planned it that his troops would surprise Muslims, and this he managed to achieve. Muslim soldiers were indeed taken unawares. However, `Amr, being the shrewd commander that he was, was not to be caught off guard. A fiery war immediately took place. Though a good number of Muslims were martyred during that battle, the Byzantines' casualties were far worse. They lost four thousand fighters: a thousand were killed and three thousand taken captives. Right upon this definite defeat, the vanquished remnants of the Byzantines dispersed throughout the country and were hardly heard of again. However, the one most significant outcome of that battle was that Tribunus was killed and so an adamant enemy of Muslims who was a source of constant trouble ceased to exist.

Pleased with the results achieved so far, `Amr did not think it wise to plunge into the next step straightaway. He knew that his fighters were weary and needed to rest. Besides, he knew that starting from that point each step he took was of grave consequences and therefore had to be carefully planned and fully mulled over. `Amr hence decided to stay at Bilbais for a while. It was not for another month that Muslim troops resumed the march heading for Misr. `Amr's next target was the castle of Umm-Dunain, a village on the Nile to the north of the famous castle of Babilion. The significance of Umm-Dunain castle lied in the fact that its garrison constituted the front-line defence against any potential attacks on the castle of Babilion. This being the case, it was imperative for Muslims to capture Umm-Dunain. They therefore besieged the castle for a while and the blockade ended in a ferocious battle wherein many Byzantines were killed or taken captives.

The Byzantines who had sought refuge at the castle of Babilion were filled with dismay when they received the news of their sad defeat at Umm-Dunain. They shuddered at the thought that they were next on Muslims' agenda. However, much to their surprise, Muslims crossed the Nile and headed for Al-Fayoom, where they dealt people there a heavy blow, a message Muslims meant to send their enemies, namely that Egypt would not remain under their sway for long.

Back in Madinah, the Commander of the Faithful mobilized succoring forces to send to `Amr. He appointed as leaders of those troops Az-Zubayr Ibn Al-`Awwaam, `Ubadah Ibn As-Saamit, Al-Miqdaad Ibn Al-Aswad and Maslamah Ibn Mukhallad. Once ready, the aiding army immediately set out to join their fellow brothers in Islam, fighting for the Cause of Allah. They took the same route followed by `Amr to Bilbais. From there, they made it to Heliopolis, where they camped. Gladly with the victory he achieved at Al-Fayoom, `Amr headed back to Heliopolis where he joined the succoring army.

`Amr realised that it was high time for what he hoped would be a decisive battle at the castle of Babilion. The shrewd commander therefore sat down and aptly contrived a subtle strategem whereby to crush the Byzantines once and for all. However, the success of his plot hinged on thinking of a ploy to get the enemies out of the castle. In the meantime, Theodore, the commander of the Byzantines in the castle, sought his aides' counsel as to whether it would be a better idea to stick to the castle till Muslims came over and attacked or to march outside and confront them at Heliopolis. Much to Muslims' good fortune, the Byzantines played right into Muslims's hands, doing the one thing they prayed they would do. All the commanders' aides were of the view that they ought to step out of the castle and be the first to attack. Leaning on his sharp perception and long experience, `Amr divided his army into three groups: five hundred took shelter in a big cave called Bani Wa'il, another five hundred were positioned at Umm-Dunain, while the main army headed for an area presently known as Al-`Abbaaseyiah, where they awaited the arrival of their enemies.

When the moment that both sides eagerly anticipated was there, the two armies engaged in fierce fighting at Al-`Abbaaseyiah, during which both parties spared no effort to annihilate the other. However, in the middle of the tumultuous battle, the Byzantine army suddenly lost its balance once it was ambush by Muslims lurking inside the Bani Wa'il cave. They were obviously confounded and taken off guard. They therefore headed straight westwards hoping to take refuge in the castle of Umm-Dunain. Much to their horror, what they hoped to be a haven was nothing but another disaster. The other ambush immediately struck. `Amr's shrewd contrivance therefore turned out to be invaluable. The Byzantine army were led to believe that they were being attacked by three armies, and hence thought that resistance would most certainly be fruitless. The majority of the confounded fighters showed the heels while the rest hurried back to the castle where they took refuge.

In the wake of Muslims' glorious victory in the battle of Al-`Abbaaseyiah, better known in books of history as the battle of `Ain Shams, `Amr got the news that the Byzantine army stationed at Al-Fayoom fled to Nequis as they were intimidated by Muslims' successive triumphs. Consequently, `Amr dispatched a well-armed unit to Al-Fayoom to capture it. Similarly, he sent another unit to the south of Delta where they captured Athreeb and Munuf in the Munufiyah province. Perhaps the less material repercussion of Muslims's victories was that the Egyptians started to think that Providence was on Muslims' side and that they were meant to be victorious in whichever battle they engaged in. This, in turn, prepared them for receiving the call to Islam from the people whom they began to feel were different from any others.

The Babilion Castle:

At that point, `Amr realised that it was high time to crown his victories achieved so far with two significant steps: namely capturing the castle of Babilion and the conquest of Egypt's magnificent capital, Alexandria. Though the Byzantine were dealt a heavy blow a number of times at Al-Farama, Bilbais, Umm-Dunain, Al-Fayoom and `Ain Shams, these past triumphs merely paved the way for the main event. He therefore immediately began to set the plan for his next target.

`Amr had to decide whether to start with the castle of Babilion or Alexandria. He chose to begin with the castle on which he imposed a rigorous blockade. `Amr was totally aware of the real depth of the situation he was up against. He realized that the blockade could last for a long while, during which a lot could take place. He did not think succor was unlikely to arrive for the Byzantines from Alexandria. However, he thought the Byzantines were more likely to give up crushing Muslims or even lifting the blockade. For a whole month, the besieged

Byzantines engaged in skirmishes against the Arabs, practically on daily basis. They threw stones and arrows at them by means of catapults and Muslims, in turn, answered by throwing stones and arrows, too. During this month, Al-Muqawqis, realising that the situation was not very promising, managed to convince his counsellors to accept a compromise. They agreed to offer Muslims a considerable amount of money in return for their lifting the blockade and evacuating the place right away. They were obviously under the illusion that their enemies launched an invasion in pursuit of money, loot or worldly goals. However, much to their surprise, Muslims declined their offer. Instead, they offered them three alternatives: either to embrace Islam and therefore be their fellow brothers and enjoy all Muslim rights, submissively pay the *Jizyah*, or continue to adamantly fight and sink deeper in ignorance.

With the situation critical as it was, a number of attempts were made to reach a compromise between the two sides. Nonetheless, that never meant the blockade was to come to an end. At last, a settlement was reached between `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas and Al-Muqawqis, which the latter said had to be sanctioned by the Byzantines emperor in Constantinople. It was hence agreed that the settlement would be sent to the emperor, but, in the meantime, the two fighting parties called a truce. After quite some time, the emperor's reply arrived, which was a shock to Al-Muqawqis. Much to his surprise, he was accused of treason, on account of which the emperor deposed him. Further, according to the Byzantine emperor, a truce with the Arabs was not an option. The Byzantine troops were to fight Muslims pompously and ferociously. This being the case, Muslims saw no point in abiding by the truce any longer. They therefore prepared to launch a massive attack against the castle of Babilion.

Muslims besieged the castle for seven long months, during which the situation grew, in every sense, intolerable. Realising that his troops were weary and exhausted, `Amr began to spur Muslims on by explaining to them that fighting for the Cause of Allah was never easy, that they were not the first to face hardships in war and that they ought not to be less intrepid or bold in the face of death than Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed in Damascus or Sa`d Ibn Abi Waqqaas in Al-Madaa'in. Az-Zubayr Ibn Al-`Awwaam was the most enthusiastic of them all. His heart was filled with a strong desire to spread Islam all across the earth even if his own life was the price to be paid. He was eagerly anxious to win Allah's reward in the Hereafter, in pursuit of which nothing would be too dear.

One evening, he thought of embarking on a daring action in order to put an end to the stagnant situation they were stuck in. He therefore stealthily swam across the trench surrounding the walls of the castle. He then put up a ladder along the outer side of the wall and agreed with his assistants to repeat the cry of war, "Allah is the Greatest" the moment they heard him shout it and to follow him right away. Driven by rare valor and steadfast faith, Az-Zubayr went up the wall, on top of which he cried loudly, "Allah is the Greatest" with his sword glittering in his hand. Muslims immediately shouted the cry of war, too. Thinking Muslims stormed into castle, the Byzantines fearfully fled. Az-Zubayr then went down on the other side of the wall, hurried to the gate of the castle and opened it, whereupon all Muslims thronged inside the castle and collected much booty.

With the castle of Babilion finally captured, Muslims began to contemplate the second stage of the conquest. `Amr believed that it was high time to invade Alexandria, then the capital of Egypt. He therefore immediately dispatched a message to the Commander of the Faithful asking him permission to head for Alexandria. `Umar, in turn, swiftly replied since he knew that Muslims would better conqueror

Alexandria before the Nile Flood, which was drawing near. No sooner did `Amr receive the Caliph's reply than he marched at the head of a massive army towards Alexandria. Before he did, he appointed Kharijah Ibn Hudhayfah Ash-Shami to command the garrison he left at the castle.

The Muslim army that `Amr marched to Alexandria amounted to fifteen thousand, if not more than twenty thousand fighters. When he asked for succor, he was granted it as `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab was of the view that so long as a leader proceeded victoriously in the land he sought to conquer, he was entitled to all the succor he needed. The crushed remnants of the Byzantine troops sought refuge at a fort, called Keryone, some distance before Alexandria. When Muslims arrived at Keryone, one of the most ferocious battles flared up, as a result of which many lives were lost on both sides, yet victory was won by neither. This no-win, no-lose situation lasted for thirteen days, and the end of which the Byzantines were finally defeated. This city of Keryone was then captured and its castles seized.

Instead of marching straight to Alexandria, `Amr chose to give his army some time to rest. He then headed for Alexandria with no resistance at all along the way. The moment Muslims laid their eyes on Alexandria, they were stunned by its matchless beauty, the like of which they did not see in Damascus, Al-Madaa'in or Antakyah. `Amr commanded his troops to storm into the city walls and towers. Anticipating that Muslims would be soon to arrive, the Byzantines were well-prepared. Once Muslim fighters approached the city walls, heavy stones were hurled down on them by the catapults stabled at the top of the walls. Muslims hardly expected such a sudden attack and were therefore taken off guard. Though the Byzantines at that point seemed to be in a better position than Muslims, particularly as they were easily succored by sea, `Amr did not give up hope. He immediately ordered his soldiers to move eastwards, away from the reach of the catapults. For ten whole months, Muslims persistently continued to blockade Alexandria, and for ten whole months, the Byzantines adamantly refused to give in. In the meantime, `Amr sent some units to Delta and Upper Egypt in pursuit of the cowed remaining Byzantine soldiers who fled to those areas. However, throughout those ten months, not for a minute did `Amr give up hope of capturing Alexandria when the time was ripe.

Conditions did not stay inconvenient for long. A favorable opportunity was soon to knock on Muslims' door. The Byzantine emperor died and was succeeded by his wife and son who came to power against the people's will. Naturally, the the whole of Byzantium: the royal court and the masses, was plunged in a state of anarchy. Busy with the inner turmoil, the Byzantines hardly had time to think about the overseas dominions. Succor ceased to be sent to Alexandria. Consequently, the garrison there grew weaker and was no longer able to keep its strength, That was `Amr's golden chance,

After the decease of Heraclius, Al-Muqawqis came back to power as commander of Alexandria. When `Amr learned that people of Alexandria, excluding the Copts, were preparing to fight Muslims, he issued a command for his soldiers to launch war against their enemies. At that point, Al-Muqawqis dispatched a messenger to `Amr calling for peace and asking for a truce, an offer which `Amr flatly rejected. This marked the start of war. It took the Byzantines a series of defeats to finally yield to Muslims. Hence, Alexandria was captured by Muslims and the word of Islam was declared all across it. With the departure of the Byzantines from Alexandria, the whole of Egypt was annexed to the Muslim state, and was guided to the

Right Path. All Byzantines had fled from Egypt, with the exception of Al-Muqawqis who chose to remain in Alexandria and spent the rest of his life in his castle till the died and was buried there.

When It Was Time to Go:

After a lifetime of striving for the sake of Allah, obedience of His Commands and sacrifice of all that is held dear, after devoting his entire life to establishing the truth, wiping out falsehood and maintaining justice among people, Al-Farooq had this strange feeling that it would not be long before he departed this life. Zayd Ibn Aslam reports that his father said: "`Umar said: 'O Allah! Grant me martyrdom in Your Cause, and let my death be in the city of Your Messenger.'" (Reported by Al-Buklhari.) In 23 AH, `Umar accompanying the Prophet's wives, performed the *Hajj* for the last time before he died. Sa`eed Ibn Al-Museeb narrates that when `Umar finished performing the *Hajj* rituals, he headed for Al-Abtah, where he supplicated to Allah: "O Allah, my strength has waned, I have aged and my subjects have spread everywhere. So take my life before I fall short of discharging my duty or lapse in ignorance." He then went back to Madinah where he addressed people saying: "O people, I have established for you the Prophet's *Sunnah*, enjoined on you Allah's commands and left you on clear-cut track so you would not lead people astray." Sa`eed proceeds: "The months of Dhul-Hijjah was not over before `Umar was killed." He even had a dream that foretold his martyrdom. It is reported that `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab went up the pulpit on a Friday, praised Allah and glorified Him, mentioned the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him and Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, then said: "I have had a dream that I can only have when my life is about to end. I saw a cock which pecked at me twice. I recounted this dream of mine to 'Asmaa' Bint `Umays who told me: 'A non-Arab man will kill you.' " The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, the was the first to break to him the good news that he will die as a martyr. Anas Ibn Malik narrates: "The Prophet once climbed the mountain of Uhud with Abu Bakr, `Umar and `Uthmaan. The mountain shook underneath their feet. The Prophet said (to the mountain): 'Be firm, O Uhud, for on you there are no more than a Prophet, a Siddiq (someone trustworthy) and two martyrs.' " (Reported by Al-Buklhari.)

Undeniably, non-Muslims whose homelands were conquered and whose glory was vanquished, were embittered and rancorous towards all who brought them to their knees, on top of whom was `Umar it Al-Khattaab. Feeling absolutely helpless and hand-tied against the tidal wave of Islam that swept over borders and washed away all Kingdoms, they therefore saw their only hope in the evil plots they concocted, the most vicious of which was assassinating `Umar, may Allah be pleased with him.

The whole episode started as such. While `Umar was walking in the marketplace, he met Fayrooz Abu Lo'lo'ah, who was one of the Magian captives of the battle of Nahawand and was a slave under Al-Mugheerah Ibn Shu`bah. Abu Lo'lo'ah was full of indignation as he loathed the Arabs for what they did to him. It is narrated that he would pass by young Persian captives, pat them on the head, cry and say: "The Arabs have devoured my liver." Those words of his betray the grudge he bore against Islam and Muslims. When `Umar met Abu Lo'lo'ah, the latter was visibly upset. He said to `Umar: "O Commander of the Faithful, I need your help for Al-Mugheerah has imposed on me an enormous *Kharaj*." `Umar asked: "How much is your *Kharaj*?" The man replied: "Two *Dirhams* a day." `Umar then asked: "What do you do for a living?" He returned: "I am a carpenter, a blacksmith and a painter." `Umar rejoined: "I do not think the *Kharaj* is overestimated given all the jobs you can do. I was told that you said you can make a mill that grinds by the power of the wind." He said, "I did." He then rejoined: "I will certainly make you a mill that people in the East and the West will talk about." He then left. `Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, remarked: "The slave has already threatened me." `Umar next went home. The following morning, the Bishop came to see `Umar and told him: " Beware, for you will die in three days, Commander of the Faithful." `Umar asked: "How do you know?" The Bishop answered: "I read it in our Holy Book, the Torah." `Umar asked: "Oh?! Is `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab mentioned in the Torah?" He answered: "No, but I did read your description and I learned that your life is drawing to an end." `Umar suffered from no malady then and felt no pain and all. The next day, the Bishop came again and said: "A day has passed by and you have only two left." The following day, the Bishop came to meet `Umar again and told him: "Two days have gone and you only have a single day uptill next morning." At dawn, `Umar went out to pray. He had appointed people to straighten rows in the mosque, so that when they were ready, he would walk in repeating, "Allah is the Greatest." That morning, Abu Lo'lo'ah stealthily stepped into the mosque among Muslims holding a two-edged dagger with the handle in the middle. He headed straight for `Umar and stabbed him six times, one of which was aimed below his navel and it eventually killed him. Though seriously wounded and bleeding, finishing prayer was the first thing on `Umar's mind. The moment he fell to the ground, he said: "Is `Abdur-Rahmaan among the people?" People answered: "He is, Commander of the Faithful. There he is." `Umar said: "Step forward and lead people in prayer." So `Abdur-Rahmaan did while `Umar was lying down on the floor. He was then carried to his house. As for Abu Lo'lo'ah, he killed himself after murdering six other Muslims. (Reported by At-Tabarani.)

`Umar was greatly concerned with finding out who murdered him. He therefore said: "Go find out who killed me, 'Abdullah Ibn `Umar." He replied: "You were stabbed by Abu Lo'lo'ah, the slave of Al-Mugheerah." `Umar thereupon returned: "Praise be to Allah that I was not killed by one who could argue with me before Allah on the grounds that he once kneeled down in prostration before Him." (Reported by Ibn Sa`d.)

Similarly, `Umar was interested in knowing what people thought of his assassination. That is why he asked Ibn `Abbaas to ask *Muhajireen* (the Emigrants) and *Ansaar* (Medinan Helpers) and about what had befallen him. Ibn `Abbaas went out and did as `Umar asked him to. People said: "We swear that we wish Allah would take years of our lives and add them to his." It is also reported that whenever Ibn `Abbaas passed by people, he found them weeping, as if each had lost his eldest child. Ibn `Abbaas remarks: "I saw signs of joy on `Umar's face (i.e. when he learned of that)."

`Umar's assassination was, in every sense, meant to be a stab in the back of Islam. It was perpetrated by Abu Lo'lo'ah, Al-Hurmuthaan, the captured king of Al-Ahwaaz, who was released by `Umar as well as Jufaynah Al-Anbari, the Christian. The Bishop may also have been in on it. The fact that `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab never had guards around him, like rulers always do, made the assassin's job far easier.

Ibn Sa`d reports that `Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn `Awf saw the dagger with which `Umar was killed with Al-Hurmuthaan and Jufaynah. He also reports that `Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn Abi Bakr As-Sideeq said when `Umar was stabbed: "I passed by Abu Lo'lo'ah `Umar's murderer, while he was secretly talking to Al-Hurmuthaan and Jufaynah, one of the Christians of Al-Hayrah. When I caught them off guard, they were startled and dropped a two-edged dagger with its handle in the middle. So see whether it is the one." They discovered that the dagger with which `Umar was stabbed was exactly the one `Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn Abi Bakr As-Sideeq described.

`Amr Ibn Maymoon narrates: "I saw `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab a few days before he was stabbed in Madinah. He was standing with Hudhaifah Ibn Al-Yaman and `Uthmaan Ibn Hunayf to whom he said: 'What have you done? Do you think that you have imposed more taxation on the land (of As-Swaad i.e. Iraq) than it can bear?' They replied: 'We have imposed on it what it can bear because of its great yield.' `Umar again said: 'Check whether you have imposed on the land what it can not bear.' They said, 'No, (we haven't).' `Umar added: 'If Allah should keep me alive, I will let the widows of Iraq need no men to support them after me.' But only four days had elapsed when he was stabbed (to death ). The day he was stabbed, I was standing and there was nobody between me and him (i.e. `Umar) except `Abdullaah Ibn `Abbaas. Whenever `Umar passed between the two rows, he would say, 'Stand in straight lines.' When he saw no defect (in the rows), he would go forward and start the prayer with *Takbir*. He would recite Surat Yusuf or An-Nahl or the like in the first *Rak`ah* so that the people may have time to join the prayer. As soon as he said *Takbir*, I heard him saying: 'The dog has killed or eaten me,' at the time he (i.e. the murderer) stabbed him. A non-Arab infidel proceeded on carrying a double-edged knife and stabbing all persons he passed by on the right and left (till) he stabbed thirteen persons out of whom seven died. When one of the Muslims saw that, he threw a cloak on him. Realizing that he had been captured, the non-Arab infidel killed himself, `Umar held the hand of `Abdur-Rahman Ibn `Awf and let him lead the prayer. Those who were standing by the side of `Umar saw what I saw, but the people who were in the other parts of the mosque did not see anything, but they lost the voice of `Umar and they were saying, '*Subhan Allah*! *Subhan Allah*! (i.e. Glorified be Allah).' `Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn `Awf led the people in a short prayer. When they finished, `Umar said, "O Ibn `Abbaas! Find out who attacked me." Ibn `Abbaas kept on looking here and there for a short time and came to say, "The slave of Al-Mugheerah." On that `Umar said, 'The craftsman?' Ibn `Abbaas said, 'Yes.' `Umar said: 'May Allah curse him. I did not treat him unjustly. Praise be to Allah Who has not caused me to die at the hand of a man who claims himself to be a Muslim. No doubt, you and your father (`Abbaas) used to love to have more non-Arab infidels in Madinah." Al-`Abbaas had the greatest number of slaves. Ibn `Abbaas said to `Umar: 'If you wish, we will do.' He meant, 'If you wish we will kill them.' `Umar said: 'You are mistaken (for you cannot kill them) after they have spoken your language, prayed towards your *Qiblah* (i.e. the direction towards which Muslims turn in prayer), and performed Hajj like yours."

Then `Umar was carried to his house, and we went along with him, and the people were as if they had never suffered a calamity before. Some said: 'Do not worry (he will be alright soon).' Some said: 'We are afraid (that he will die).' Then an infusion of dates was brought to him and he drank it but it came out (of the wound) of his belly. Then milk was brought to him and he drank it, and it also came out of his belly. People realized that he would die. We went to him, and the people came, praising him. A young man came saying, "O Commander of the Faithful, receive the glad tidings from Allah to you due to your company with Allah's Messenger and your superiority in Islam which you know. Then you became the ruler (i.e. Caliph) and you ruled with justice and finally you have been martyred.' `Umar said: 'I wish that all these privileges would counterbalance (my shortcomings) so that I will neither lose nor gain anything.'

When the young man turned back to leave, his clothes seemed to be touching the ground. `Umar said, 'Call the young man back to me.' (When he came back) `Umar said: 'O son of my brother! Lift your clothes, for this will keep your clothes clean and save you from the Punishment of your Lord.' `Umar further said: "O `Abdullaah Ibn `Umar! See how much I am in debt to others.' When the debt was checked, it amounted to approximately eighty-six thousand. `Umar said: 'If the property of `Umar's family covers the debt, then pay the debt thereof; otherwise request it from Bani `Adi Ibn Ka`b, and if that too is not sufficient, ask for it from Quraysh tribe, and do not ask for it from any one else, and pay this debt on my behalf.'

`Umar then said (to `Abdullaah): 'Go to `Aishah (the Mother of the Faithful) and say: '`Umar sends you his greetings. But don't say, the Commander of the Faithful, because today I am not the Commander of the Faithful. Say: '`Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab asks the permission to be buried with his two companions (i.e. the Prophet, and Abu Bakr).' `Abdullaah greeted `Aishah and asked for the permission to come in. When he walked in on her, he found her weeping. He said to her, '`Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab sends you his greetings, and asks for your permission to be buried with his two companions.' She said: 'I was saving this place for myself, but I will prefer `Umar to myself." When he returned, it was said (to `Umar): "`Abdullaah Ibn `Umar has come.' `Umar said: 'Help me sit up.' Somebody supported him against his body and `Umar asked (`Abdullaah), 'What news do you have?' He said: 'O Commander of the Faithful! It is as you wish. She has given the permission." `Umar said: 'Praise be to Allah, there was nothing more important to me than this. So when I die, take me, and greet `Aishah and say: '`Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab asks the permission (to be buried with the Prophet), and if she gives the permission, bury me there. If she refuses, take me to the graveyard of Muslims."

Then Hafsah (the Mother of the Faithful, and `Umar's daughter) came in along with other women. When we saw her, we went away. She went in (to `Umar) and wept there for some time. When the men asked for permission to enter, she went into another place, and we heard her weeping inside. The people said (to `Umar), 'O Commander of the Faithful! Appoint a successor.' `Umar said: 'I do not find anyone more suitable for the job than the following persons whom Allah's Messenger had been pleased with before he died." Then `Umar mentioned `Ali, `Uthmaan, Az-Zubayr, Talha, Sa`d and `Abdur-Rahmaan (Ibn `Awf) and said: "`Abdullaah Ibn `Umar will be a witness to you, but he will have no share in ruling. His being a witness will compensate him for not sharing this right. If Sa`d becomes the ruler, it will be alright: otherwise, whoever becomes the ruler should seek his help, as I have not dismissed him because of disability or dishonesty.' `Umar added: 'I advise my successor to take care of the early Emigrants (*Muhajireen*); to know their rights and protect their honor and sacred things.

I also advise him to be kind to the Ansar who had lived in Madinah before the Emigrants and faith had entered their hearts before them. I advise the ruler to accept the good of the righteous among them and excuse their wrong-doers, and I advise him to do good to all the people of the provinces, as they are the defenders of Islam and the source of wealth and the source of annoyance to the enemy. I also recommend that nothing be taken from them except from their surplus with their consent. I advise him to do good to the Arab bedouins, as they are the origin of the Arabs and those who lend linguistic support to Islam. He should take from their surplus properties and hand it to the poor amongst them. I also advise him concerning Allah's and His Messenger's protectees (i.e. *Dhimmis*) to honor the promises he makes them and to fight for them and not to overburden them with what is beyond their ability.' So when `Umar passed away, we carried him out and set out walking. `Abdullaah Ibn `Umar greeted (`Aishah) and said, '`Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab asks for your permission." `Aishah said, 'Bring him in.' He was brought in and buried next to his two companions.

When he was buried, the group (recommended by `Umar) held a meeting. Then `Abdur-Rahmaan said: 'Reduce the candidates for rulership to three of you.' Az-Zubayr said, 'I give up my right to `Ali.' Talha said: 'I give up my right to `Uthmaan.' Sa`d said: 'I give up my right to `Abdur-Rahman Ibn `Awf.' `Abdur-Rahmaan then said (to `Uthmaan and `Ali): "Now which of you is willing to give up his right of candidacy to that he may choose the better of the (remaining) two, bearing in mind that Allah and Islam will be his witnesses.' So both *Sheiks* (i.e. `Uthmaan and `Ali) kept silent. `Abdur-Rahmaan said: 'Will you both leave this matter to me, and I take Allah as my Witness that I will not choose but the better of you?' They said, 'Yes.' So `Abdur-Rahmaan took the hand of one of them (i.e. `Ali) and said, 'You are related to Allah's Messenger and one of the earliest Muslims as you know well. So I ask you by Allah to promise that if I select you as a ruler you will maintain justice, and if I select `Uthmaan as a ruler you will listen to him and obey him.' Then he took the other (i.e. `Uthmaan) aside and said the same to him. When `Abdur-Rahmaan secured (their agreement to) this covenant, he said, 'O `Uthmaan! Raise your hand.' So he (i.e. `Abdur-Rahmaan) gave him (i.e. `Uthmaan) the solemn pledge; `Ali did the same, and then all people in Madinah gave him their pledge of allegiance." (Reported by Al-Buklhari.)

Ibn `Umar said: "`Umar's head was resting on my lap. So he said: 'Place my cheek on the ground.' So I did. He then said: 'Woe unto me and woe unto my mother if Allah does not have mercy on me.'" (Reported by Adh-Dhahabi.)

Just as `Umar's life was an example of justice and asceticism, his death was, too. His dying request to his son, `Abdullaah was: "Be economic when shrouding me, for if I have earned myself Allah's good reward, He will grant me what is far better than it, and if not, He will immediately take it away from me. Be economic when digging my grave, for if I have earned myself Allah's good reward, He will then expand it for me for as far as my eyes can see, and if not, He will shrink it till my ribs are squeezed. No woman is to attend my funeral. Do not praise me for what is not in me, for Allah knows best all about me. Hurry as you carry me to my grave, for if I have earned myself Allah's good reward, you will have brought me to what is far better for me, and if not, you will have taken off your shoulders an evil you were carrying." (Reported by Ibn Sa`d.)

The Prophet's Companions Commend `Umar:

Abu Wa'il, may Allah rest his soul in peace, narrates: "`Abdullaah Ibn Mas`ood informed us of `Umar's death. Never have I seen him weeping more or looking sadder than that day. He then said: ' I swear by Allah should I know that `Umar loved a dog, I would love it.'"

`Abdullaah Ibn `Abbaas was asked: "What have you got to say about `Umar?" He answered: "May Allah have mercy on Abu Hafs (i.e. `Umar). I swear that he was an ally of Islam, a shelter for the orphans, a residence for faith, an example of benevolence, a resort for the weak, a defender of the truth, a source of help for people. Armed with patience and seeking Allah's reward, he strove till Islam was victorious, provinces conquered, and the name of Allah, Exalted be He, mentioned on hills and landscapes. He glorified Allah in times of plenty and hardships, and was grateful to Him all the time. Whoever hates him shall be doomed till Judgment Day. (Quoted from Ar-Riyad An-Nadirah.)

Al-`Abbaas Ibn `Abdul-Mutalib, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "I was `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab's neighbour. Never have I seen anyone better than `Umar; he would spend all night praying, and all day fasting and fulfilling people's needs." (Reported by As-Siyooti.)

Hudhayfah stated: "While `Umar lived, Islam was like an approaching man who only gets closer. When `Umar, may Allah rest his soul in peace, was killed, it became like a leaving man who only gets further." (Reported by Ibn Sa`d.)

Ibn `Abbaas, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, said: "`Umar was on his bed and was surrounded by people praying and supplicating before he was carried to his grave. I was among them, and I was startled by a man who placed his hand on my shoulder. It was `Ali Ibn Abu Taalib. He prayed that Allah would have mercy on `Umar and said: "I have never wished to meet the Lord having done deeds better than yours. I swear by Allah that I think you will join your companion. I thought I often heard the Prophet, peace and blessing be upon him, say: 'Abu Bakr, `Umar and I went; Abu Bakr, `Umar and I came in; Abu Bakr, `Umar and I stepped out.'" (Reported by Al-Bukhari.)

Ibn `Abbaas, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, said: "Always mention `Umar, for if you mention him, you mention justice; and if you mention justice, you mention Allah, Glorified be He." (Quoted from Asadul-Ghaabah.)

Among `Umar's Memorable Words:

"Take account of yourselves before you are brought to account."

Jabir said that he heard `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab say on the pulpit when he married Umm Kulthoom, the daughter of `Ali and Faatimah: "Do not disparage me (for marrying a young girl), for I heard the Prophet say: 'On Judgment Day every means will be cut off and every lineage severed except my lineage.'" He desired to place himself in the Prophet's lineage through this marriage due to the precedence of *Ahl Al-Bayt* (i.e. the Prophet's household) in the Prophet's intercession. Umm Kulthoom bore him two children, Zayd and Ruqayyah.

From Malik Ad-Darr: "The people suffered a draught in `Umar's caliphate, whereupon a man came to the grave of the Prophet and said: 'O Messenger of Allah! Ask for rain for your nation, for verily they have but perished.' After this the Prophet appeared to him in a dream and told him: 'Go to `Umar and give him my greeting, then tell him that they will be watered. Tell him, Be clever!' The man went to `Umar and repeated to him those words. The latter said: 'My lord, I spare no effort except in what escapes my power.'"

From Mujahid: "We found that the goodness of our lives was patience."

From `Urwah Ibn Az-Zubayr: "I swear by Allah that my heart has softened for Allah's sake until it became softer than butter, and it has hardened for Allah's sake until it became harder than stone."

From `Awn Ibn `Abdullaah Ibn `Utbah: "Sit with the Oft-repentent (*Al-Tawwaaboon*), for they are the softest-hearted of people."

From Aslam, `Umar's freedman: "Be the vessels of the

Book and the·well-springs of knowledge, and ask Allah for your sustenance day by day."

From Abu `Uthmaan An-Nahdi: "Winter is the treasure of devotees."

From Yahya Ibn Abu Katheer: "If it were announced from heaven: 'O people! You will all be admitted to Paradise except one,' I would fear to be he; and if it were announced: 'O people! You will all enter Hellfire except one,' I would hope to be he."

As we bid this righteous companion goodbye, we can only pray: May Allah handsomely reward you for all that you did for Islam and Muslims. The story of your life abounds in lessons for us and for the entire world to contemplate. You have certainly managed to leave an indelible mark in the history of mankind. No wonder that all people, be they Muslims or non-Muslims, can only marvel at such a unique person, the light of whom has never trodden the earth thereafter.

عثمان بن عفان ﵁

`Uthmaan Ibn `Affaan

may Allah be pleased with him

"Should I not be bashful of a man in whose presence even the Angels feel bashful."

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

- His Early Days
- His Personal Appearance
- `Uthmaan Embraces Islam
- `Uthmaan Earns the Title *Dhun-Noorayn* (Owner of the Two Lights)
- The Angels Feel Bashful in the Presence Of `Uthmaan
- *Hadiths* on the Virtues of `Uthmaan
- `Uthmaan as a Great Scholar
- `Uthmaan Elected Caliph
- `Uthmaan's First Address
- The First Case before `Uthmaan
- Conquests in the Life-Time of `Uthmaan
- Rebellion of Azerbaijan and Armenia
- Byzantine Invasion of Alexandria
- Conquest of Khurasan and Tabrastan
- Conquest of North Africa
- The Conquest of Cyprus
- The Battle of Dhaat As-Sawaari (31 652 AC)
- Uthman's Pioneering acts
- Official Manuscript of the Glorious Qur'an
- Extension of the Prophet's Mosque
- `Uthmaan's Trial
- Main Causes
- Who Is `Abdullaah Ibn Saba'? And What Is His Relation to the Sedition?
- The Caliph's Meeting with the Governors of Provinces
- The Siege of Caliph's House and His Martyrdom

His Early Days:

Born six years after the year of the elephant (*`Aam Al-Feel*), `Uthmaan Ibn `Affaan, may Allah be pleased with him, belonged to a well-reputed and honorable family of Makkah in the period of *Jahiliyyah*, Banu Umayyah, a branch of the tribe of Quraysh. His ancestral pedigree joins with that of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him in the fifth generation. His father's name is `Uthmaan Ibn `Affaan Ibn Abi Al-`Aas̱ Ibn Ummayyah Ibn `Abd Shams Ibn `Abd Manaaf. His mother's name is Arwa Bint Kurayẕ. `Uthmaan was also known by other names, namely Abu `Abdullaah and Abu Laylah.

`Uthmaan was one of the few persons in Makkah who learned how to read and write at an early age, and as a young man became a successful merchant and businessman. Of all his contemporaries, he was a venerable man of overrated virtue and outstanding attributes. Though he was extremely wealthy and of high rank, he was always noted for his modesty and humbleness. Even before landing on the safe shore of Islam, he was a soft natured and kind hearted man; he used to help the needy and the poor-stricken, and did not hesitate to spend any amount of money on seeing a man in trouble in order to remove his misery. For his lofty morals and descent way of expression, the Makkans had great respect for him. It is also said that he never wronged anyone, nor did anything obscene, or prostrated himself before idols in *Jahiliyyah*.

His Personal Appearance:

It is said that `Uthmaan, may Allah be pleased with him, was a little above average height, extremely handsome, a fair-skinned man with a touch of redness in his face, brunet, largejointed, broad-shouldered, with a thick beard which he dyed yellow, and long hair which reached his shoulders, and gold-braced teeth.

`Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn Hazm Al-Muzanyy is reported to have said: "I saw `Uthmaan Ibn `Affaan, and I never saw a man or a woman handsomer of face than him." (Reported by Ibn `Asaakir.)

`Uthmaan Embraces Islam:

`Uthmaan, may Allah be pleased with him, was among the early converts to Islam. He and Abu Bakr were close friends, and it was Abu Bakr who convinced him to embrace Islam, when the latter was thirty-four years of age.

It is narrated that when `Uthmaan was informed about Prophet Muhammad's giving his daughter Ruqayyah in marriage to his paternal cousin `Utbah Ibn Abi Lahab, he regretted he had not asked for her hand before him, because everyone wanted to marry her because of her good manners and noble descent. `Uthmaan went home one day in a state of sorrow to find there his maternal aunt Su`da Bint Kurayz, who was a very wise and old woman. She gave him the glad tidings that a Prophet would be sent to abolish idol worship and call to monotheism, and she started calling him to the new faith, which she said would fulfil his desires.

`Uthmaan narrates: I went away thinking of my aunt's words. I met Abu Bakr and told him of what she said, whereupon Abu Bakr said to me: "By Allah, your aunt has spoken the truth, and has given you glad tidings. O `Uthmaan! You are a wise man of sound opinion. You know exactly where the truth lies, and falsehood cannot find way to your heart." Then he said to me: "What are those idols which our people take as lords?! Are they not idols which neither see nor hear, and do not respond to our prayer?! "Definitely yes," I replied. Abu Bakr continued, "What your aunt foretold has come true: Allah has sent His Messenger to all mankind with a religion of truth and guidance." I asked, "Who is he?" Abu Bakr answered, "He is Mu<u>h</u>ammad Ibn `Abdellaah Ibn `Abdel Muttalib." I wondered, "The Truthful and Trustworthy?!" "Yes, he is," said Abu Bakr. I said, "Would you accompany me to him?" Abu Bakr accepted, and we went together to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. When the Prophet saw me he said, "Respond to Allah's call, O `Uthmaan, for I am Allah Messenger to you in particular and to all people in general."

`Uthmaan added: "By Allah, no sooner had I looked at him and listened to his words than he become the apple of my eye and found his way quickly to my heart. I therefore did not hesitate to acknowledge his prophethood and believe in him. I pronounced *Shahadah*: there is no god but Allah, and Mu<u>h</u>ammad is the Messenger of Allah.

When he accepted Islam, the Quraysh who once loved `Uthmaan became his enemies. Even his relatives began to rebuke him and chastised him severely.

One of the daughters of the Prophet, Ruqayyah was married to one of the sons of Abu Lahab (an arch-enemy of Islam). When the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, started to preach Islam, Abu Lahab asked his son `Utbah to divorce her. No sooner had `Uthmaan heard of the divorce of Ruqayyah than he rushed to ask for her hand, and the Prophet in turn gave her in marriage to him. Thus he fulfilled his long-established desire.

`Uthmaan Earns the Title *Dhun-Noorayn* (Owner of the Two Lights):

`Uthmaan, may Allah be pleased with him, earned the title *Dhun-Noorayn*, or owner of the two lights, because he enjoyed the high privilege of entering into matrimonial alliance with two daughters of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These two daughters were the lights which illuminated his house, and thus he was called *Dhun-Noorayn*. First he married Ruqayyah following her getting divorced from `Utbah, and she died during the battle of Badr. Ruqayyah was seriously ill just before the battle of Badr, and `Uthmaan sought the Prophet's permission to stay behind with a view to looking after her. The Prophet excused him from participating in the battle, and further gave him the glad tidings that he would be rewarded as though he had taken part in the battle.

Then illness of Ruqayyah proved fatal and finally she passed away. At the time of burial, the news came that Muslims gained victory over Quraysh. Yet, the death of Ruqayyah had left `Uthmaan deeply grieved, so the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, offered him the hand of his second daughter, Umm Kulthoom. `Uthmaan accepted the Prophet's proposal and married his second daughter. The latter lived with him until she died on the ninth year after *Hijrah*.

Scholars state that no one except `Uthmaan is known to have married two daughters of a Prophet, and because of this he was called *Dhun-Noorayn*.

The Angels Feel Bashful in the Presence Of `Uthmaan:

`Uthmaan, may Allah be pleased with him, was a very pious Companion and a man of high character. He was the most bashful of all the Companions of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him.

The Mother of the Believers, `Aa'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, narrates: The Prophet was lying down one day in my apartment with his thighs (or shanks) exposed. Then Abu Bakr came and sought permission to enter, and the Prophet bade him come in, in that very state of his. Abu Bakr came in and spoke to him and, having his need fulfilled, went back. Then, `Umar came, sought permission to enter, and the Prophet permitted him to enter while he was in that state. `Umar entered and spoke to the Prophet and, having his need fulfilled, went back. Then, `Uthmaan came and sought permission to enter, whereupon the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, sat up, straightened his clothing, and then let him enter. `Uthmaan came in and spoke to the Prophet. After he had gone, I asked the Prophet: "Abu Bakr came in and you neither sat up nor show any anxiety (with regard to dressing), and `Umar came in and you neither sat up nor show any anxiety. But when `Uthmaan came in, you straightened out your clothing?! The Prophet said: *"Should I not be bashful of a man in whose presence even the angels feel bashful?"* (Reported by Moslem.)

Hadiths on the Virtues of `Uthmaan:

In addition to the *Hadiths* mentioned earlier, the following *Hadiths* may be quoted in order to confirm the virtues and outstanding merits of `Uthmaan Ibn `Affaan, may Allah be pleased with him.

Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "`Uthmaan" purchased Paradise from the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, two times: when he dug the well of Roomah and when he equipped the army of Al-`Usrah." (Reported by Al-Haakim.)

Abu Hurayrah also narrates that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, *"`Uthmaan is the most of my Companions in resembling my character."* (Reported by Ibn `Asaakir.)

On the authority of `Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, who says, "I heard the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, say to `Uthmaan: *"If I had forty daughters, I would give them in marriage to you one by one until no one of them remained."* (Reported by Ibn `Asaakir.)

`Asmah Ibn Malik narrates: When the Prophet's daughter who was married to `Uthman died, the Prophet said: *"Give your daughters in marriage to `Uthmaan. If I had a third daughter, I would give her in marriage to him, and I never gave him my daughters except in compliance with a Divine Revelation."* (Reported by At-Tabaraani.)

Ibn `Umar, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, reports that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: *"The Angels feel bashful of `Uthmaan the way they feel bashful of Allah and Hid Messenger."* (Reported by Ibn Abu Ya`la.)

Zayd Ibn Thaabit, may Allah be pleased with him, reports that he heard the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, saying: *"`Uthmaan passed by me when an angel was sitting with me. The angel exclaimed, "A martyr whose people will kill! We feel bashful of him!"* (Reported by Ibn `Asaakir)

Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, reports that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: *"The most compassionate of my nation is Abu Bakr; the firmest in abiding by Allah's Law is `Umar; the most bashful is `Uthmaan; the most knowledgeable of what is lawful and what is prohibited is*

Mu`aadh Ibn Jabal; the best in reciting the Qur'an is Ubayy; the most knowledgeable of Al-Faraa'id (the law of inheritance) is Zayd Ibn Thaabit. Every nation has Ameen (an honest and trustworthy man), and the Ameen of this nation is `Ubaydah Ibn Al-Jarraah." (Reported by At-Tirmidhi, An-Nasaa'i and Ibn Majah)

`Uthmaan as a Great Scholar:

`Uthmaan, may Allah be pleased with him, had a beautiful handwriting because of which the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, appointed him as one of the scribes of the *Wahy* (Revelation). His style of writing was well recognized among the Companions of the Prophet. People who are well versed in Arabic can easily recognize the fluency of his writings of the letters and the orders he sent to various rulers during his caliphate. Though he was not an orator, his way of lecturing was very eloquent and effective. His addresses and lectures can be seen in history books.

`Uthmaan was a great scholar of the Glorious Qur'an; he was a *Haafiz*[1]. He was well versed in *Asbaab An-Nozool*, i.e. the occasions of revelation of various verses and the *Surahs* of the Glorious Qur'an, and was considered an authority in this respect. He was one of the few Companions who excelled in deriving rulings and verdicts from the verses of the Qur'an.

Although he was not a great jurist like `Umar and `Ali, he was well qualified in this respect. His verdicts and judgements have been mentioned in the books of jurisprudence. He was considered an authority on the laws of *Hajj*. Even `Umar asked `Uthmaan about that during his time.

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[1] The one who commits the whole Qur'an to memory.

`Uthmaan Elected Caliph:

According to At-Tabari who narrates on the authority of `Umar Ibn Maymoon Al-Awdi, that the council of consultants (nominated by `Umar) at last decided to make `Uthmaan, may Allah be pleased with him, the caliph for the following reasons: When `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab was stabbed, he was asked: "O! Commander of the Faithful, if you were to nominate your successor, who would you choose?" `Umar answered: "Who would I choose? Had Abu `Ubaydah Ibn Al-Jarraah been alive, I would have made him the caliph. If my Lord asked me why I did, I'd say: I heard Your Messenger say: "He is the commander of this nation". Had Salim, Abu Hudhayfah's servant been alive, I would have made him the caliph. If my Lord ask me why I did, I'd say I heard Your Messenger say: "Verily Salim has great love for Allah." A man then said to `Umar: " I can tell you who to choose. `Abdullaah Ibn `Umar." `Umar angrily returned: "May Allah punish you! I swear that you have not suggested him seeking merely Allah's satisfaction. We have no interest in being in charge of your affairs. I was never happy to shoulder this responsibility. That is why I would never have any of my family undertake it. It is enough to have only one of this household held accountable for Muhammad's nation. I have done my utmost, and deprived my family (from all luxury). Should I manage to escape Allah's punishment, I would be pleased."

When people said: "O! Commander of the Faithful, just name someone." `Umar said: "I do not want to shoulder your responsibility in this world and the Hereafter. But you should listen to this Eminent group whom the Messenger of Allah described as being among the dwellers of Paradise: `Ali, `Uthmaan, the two sons of `Abdu-Manaaf, `Abdur-Rahmaan and Sa`d, the two uncles of Allah's Messenger, Az-Zubayr Ibn Al-`Awaam, the Prophet's supporter and cousin, and good-natured Talhah Ibn `Ubaydellaah. Appoint any of them. If he appoints any of you as a governor, this person should perform his duty and you should all assist him. If the caliph entrusts anyone with anything, this person must discharge truthfully what is entrusted to him." The men then went out.

After `Umar was buried, the council of consultant (i.e. *Ash-Shura*) gathered. They were five and their meeting was attended by `Abdullaah Ibn `Umar whereas Talhah was absent. Lengthy discussions and deliberations took place. At-Tabari points that for nights, the house of Abdur-Rahmaan was the meeting spot for many Companions, prominent figures and dignitaries, the majority of whom opted for `Uthmaan.

Three days after `Umar's death, `Abdur- Rahmaan stood up in the Mosque addressing a large crowd saying: "O people, everyone would like to go home to their provinces knowing who the new caliph would be." Sa`eed Ibn Zayd, who was one of the ten men whom the Prophet foretold would be among the dwellers of Paradise, said: "We see you as best suited for the post." `Abdur-Rahmaan said: "Give me a different opinion."

Then `Umar Ibn Yasir said: "If you do not want Muslims to fight each other, you should nominate `Ali." Al-Miqdad Ibn Al-Aswad rejoined: "`Umar is right. Should you select `Ali, we will all be pleased and will support him." But `Abdullaah Ibn Abu Sarh said: "If you don't want to upset the Qurayshites, you should name `Uthmaan." `Abdullaah Ibn Abi Rabee`ah supported the suggestion and said: "Should you appoint `Uthmaan as the new caliph, we will all listen to his commands and abide by his rulings." Then `Amaar said to `Abdullaah Ibn Abu Sarh: "When did you start giving Muslims' advice." Later, Banu Hashim and Banu Umayah took part in the discussion. `Amaar said: " Allah has honored us with His Messenger (i.e. Muhammad), and by revealing Islam unto us.

Why cannot the new caliph be one of your Prophet's kinsmen?" Thereupon, confusion and chaos spread among the people, so Sa`d Ibn Abi Waqqaas said: "O! `Abdur-Rahmaan, get this affair over with before the situation gets out of control. `Abdur-Rahmaan then said: "I have observed this issue and sought people's advice. O people, do not create enmity among yourselves."

Next, `Abdur-Rahmaan called `Ali and said to him: "Do you pledge to stick to the Glorious Book of Allah, the *Sunnah* of His Messenger and the laid-down principles of the two caliphs who followed him?" `Ali replied: "I hope to act according to my best knowledge and capacity!" After that `Abdur-Rahmaan called `Uthmaan and asked him the same question he asked `Ali. `Uthmaan answered: "I do." `Abdur-Rahmaan then gave him his pledge of allegiance. At that point, `Ali said to `Abdu-Rahmaan: "You are biased to him for the sake of worldly goals." `Abdur-Rahmaan replied: "Do not misunderstand the situation. I have consulted people and they have all chosen `Uthmaan." He then added: "I swear by Allah, I have tried my utmost for the Muslims' best!"

On that day, Talhah arrived from his trip. When people asked to give the pledge of allegiance to `Uthmaan, he asked if every are pleased with the choice. They answered in the affirmative. He then headed for `Uthmaan who, in turn, assured him that he is entitled to his own opinion. Talhah ultimately pledge loyalty to him refusing to go against what Muslims have unanimously agreed on.

Hence, it becomes obvious that `Uthmaan made his way to the caliphate through consultations and deliberations (i.e. *Shura*) patiently undertaken by `Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn `Awf. It should crystal-clear to everyone that `Abdur-Rahmaan spared no effort in seeking Muslims' true opinion so as to ensure that the ultimate choice would be a genuine interpretation of what the masses really wanted. This is proved by the fact that `Uthmaan was nominated as caliph by `Ali, Sa`d and Az-Zubayr, whereas `Uthmaan was the only one who nominated `Ali. It is thus true that the decision to nominate `Uthmaan to be in charge of Muslims' affairs voiced the desire of the majority of Muslims. In this case, no one can say. Exactly the number of this majority in favour of `Uthmaan.

Consequently, we are not in support of the view that `Ali would have been made caliph if he had said "yes" when `Abdur-Rahmaan asked him saying: "Do you pledge to stick to the Glorious Book of Allah, the *Sunnah* of His Messenger and the laid-down principles of the two caliphs who followed him?" Nor was `Uthmaan made caliph simply because he answered the same question with "yes". This view does not go in line with the principle of *Shura* , based on which `Uthmaan came to office for the following reasons:

It was `Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, who named the six men whom he felt he could trust with the future of the Muslim state if any of them was to assume the leadership of the nation. `Umar placed his trust in those men in particular since the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, foretold that they would be among the dwellers of Paradise in the Hereafter. Added to that were their impeccable morals and laudable efforts which the Companions and Muslims in general were all well-aware of.

In addition, when `Umar nominated those six men, he was positive of their advantages as well as their ability to shoulder that tremendous responsibility. There was also no shred of doubt in his mind concerning the unblemished faith, their righteous deeds and their sticking to the Glorious Qur'an and the Tradition of the Prophet. `Umar also knew that they were all pleased with the policies of the two righteous caliphs, Abu Bakr and `Umar, in running the affairs of the Muslim nation. This being the case, `Umar did not command his successor to abide by the conduct of his two predecessors. Since following the policies of Abu Bakr and `Umar was not compulsory, it would be wrong to assume that `Ali was not made a caliph because he announced that he would act according to his best knowledge and capacity.

Further, let us suppose, for argument's sake, that `Uthmaan gave `Abdur-Rahmaan the same answer `Ali did, which was undoubtedly a good and decent answer, what might have happened? Would `Abdur-Rahmaan have rejected both of them and turned to Sa`d and Az-Zubayr? The answer is no, because people's choice was confined to `Uthmaan and `Ali only.

Lastly, if the question `Abdur-Rahmaan posed to both `Uthmaan and `Ali to which the two of them gave two different answers constituted the basic criterion in deciding who was to succeed `Umar, there was no point then in all the consultations and efforts that lasted for three whole nights in order to select the new caliph? So, if this issue was based on the conversation between the two candidates and `Abdur-Rahmaan, he could have asked them immediately after `Umar was buried and announced the name of the new caliph right away sparing himself and Muslims the trouble of consultations and deliberations.

Further, `Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn `Awf could not have expected a different answer from that `Ali gave simply because Abu Bakr and `Umar ruled the Muslim state according to their best knowledge and capacity; i.e. they both relied on their personal opinion as to questions not tackled in the Glorious Qur'an and the Prophetic Tradition. For this reason, `Ali has every right, it is incumbent on him, to lean on his personal judgment too, being an equal to both Abu Bakr and `Umar in status. Likewise, it would be unfair to accuse `Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn `Awf of rejecting personal opinion or preventing the caliph from making use of his knowledge that is based on the Glorious Qur'an and the Prophetic Tradition.

Therefore, the selection of the third righteous caliph was based on a wide-scale open referendum painstakingly conducted by Ibn `Awf to ensure that the result would represent what the masses of Muslims wanted. Given such a detailed account, the issue of how `Umar was selected as Muslims' new caliph becomes crystal clear.

`Uthmaan's First Address:

As soon as `Abdur-Rahmaan gave the pledge of allegiance to `Uthmaan, people gathered to pledge loyalty to him while he was standing on the pulpit. That was on a Monday towards the end of Dhul-Hijjah, 23 year AH So he officially came to office at the start of the month of Muharam, 24 AH.

After he was given the pledge of allegiance, he went up the pulpit of Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, and addressed the people saying: "Praise and Glory be to Allah, may He be exalted. Peace and blessings be upon the Prophet. We all live in a ephemeral world as passers-by. So make the best use of your lives according to your capacity for this world is full of deception. Let not this (worldly) present life deceive you, nor let the chief deceiver (Satan) let you astray.

"Learn a lesson from the lives of those before you. Then work hard and always remember Allah, for He forgets you not. Where are all the people who lived and populated this world and lead a luxurious life? Their lives came to an end. Discard this world as Allah expects you to and seek the Hereafter which Allah describes saying:

"وَاضْرِبْ لَهُم مَّثَلَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاء أَنزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاء فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الأَرْضِ فَأَصْبَحَ هَشِيمًا تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيَاحُ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقْتَدِرًا. الْمَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْبَاقِيَاتُ الصَّالِحَاتُ خَيْرٌ عِندَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ أَملاً." (الكهف: ٤٥-٦)

"Set forth to them the similitude of the life of this world: it is like the rain which we send down from the skies: the earth's vegetation absorbs it, but soon it becomes dry stubble, which the winds do scatter: it is (only) Allah who prevails over all things. Wealth and sons are allurements of the life of this world: but the things that endure, good deeds, are best in the sight of thy Lord, as rewards, and best as (the foundation for) hopes." (Al-Kahf: 45-6)

It is obvious that the address `Uthmaan gave conveyed no agenda at all, as it made no reference to the policy he intended to follow in the future. Perhaps he thought he already did in the answer he gave `Abdur-Rahmaan while giving him the pledge of allegiance; that he would implement the Glorious Qur'an, the Prophetic tradition and the Rightly-Guided principles of the two caliphs that preceded him. On the other hand, this address was rich in deep meanings as it portrayed the character of the new caliph, who turned seventy when he came to office, who refrained from all worldly pleasures seeking Allah's reward instead. One is not to be surprised that his first address to his subjects would be to admonish and guide them righteously so that they would follow his example of piety and asceticism.

It was not too long before the new caliph publicly announced his policies in running the Muslim state. They were expressed in the messages and announcements he sent to the governors in the various provinces of the state. In his very first read, he admonished his governors to spare no effort in serving the people and never to exploit them. He advised them to take care of Muslims' affairs, give them their due rights and have them fulfill their obligations.

The second message was sent to the commanders of armies on borderlines. `Uthmaan reminded them that they were the defenders of Muslims. He asked them to follow the clear guidelines `Umar had laid down for them with no alterations.

He next wrote to the *Kharaaj* collectors wherein he reminded them that Allah accepts nothing but what is right. They therefore ought to take none but what is their due and let people have what is rightfully theirs. He urged them to treasure what they are entrusted with and warned them not be the first to betray those who placed their trust in them. He further warned them not to oppress the orphans and those under their protection, for Allah will revenge on those who oppress them.

As regards his message to the public, `Uthmaan called on his subjects to closely abide by the rulings of Islam. He warned them not to not let worldly goals distract them from what is in their best interest. He warned them that this nation would turn from consensus and truths to innovation of ideas. He pointed that the Muslim nation would witness three things in the time to come: people will amass wealth, have children begotten by their slaves, and Arabs and non-Arab will read the Qur'an, for the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: *"Ignorance is the cause of disbelief."* for when people are ignorant of something, they will resort to innovations.

The First Case before `Uthmaan:

According to historians, `Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn Abu Bakr said: `Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn `Auf saw the dagger with which `Umar was killed with Al-Hurmudhaan and Jufaynah. He also said when `Umar was stabbed: "I passed by Abu Lu'lu'ah, `Umar's murderer, while he was secretly talking to Al-Hurmudhaan and Jufaynah, one of the Christians of Al-Hayrah. When I caught them off guard, they were startled and dropped a two-edged dagger with its handle in the middle. So see whether it is the one."

A man from Banu Tameem went out to arrest the murderer. He did manage to get hold of him and kill him. He then brought back the sword which was described by `Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn Abu Bakr. When `Ubaydullah Ibn `Umar heard that, he waited until `Umar died, then grabbed a sword, headed for Al-Hurmudhaan and killed him. He next searched for Jufaynah and killed him too. However, Ibn `Umar then killed the daughter of Abu Lu'lu'ah. At this point, Sa`d Ibn Abi Waqqaas was able to snatch the sword from him. He overpowered him and locked him up in his house, with the permission of Suhayb who was then the acting caliph.

No sooner had people pledged allegiance to `Uthmaan as the new caliph than `Ubaydelalah Ibn `Umar was brought before him in the mosque in order to pass a judgment in his case. `Uthmaan sought the opinion of the elderly among the Makkan Emigrants and the Medinan Supporters saying: "I need your advice as regards this person who caused a rupture in Islam with his crime." `Ali said: "He should be killed." Some Makkan Emigrants pointed: "`Umar was killed yesterday and his son will be killed today!"

Hence, `Uthmaan was confronted with difficult, not to mention delicate situation in his early days in office. But he was able to handle the situation immediately. The caliph said: "I am the guardian of those killed, so I will take blood money instead, and it will be deducted from my money." No doubt that the caliph displayed obvious wisdom in dealing with a very thorny and complicated issue.

The reason why that was such a precarious situation was because `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, a prominent figure in the Islamic world, was killed the day before, and the perpetrator was put to death right away. Killing Abu Lu'lu'ah was indeed the just penalty, according to the law of equality in punishment (*Al-Qisaas*), since it was one soul that executed the crime.

`Ubaydelalah Ibn `Umar, having heard the story of `Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn Abu Bakr, had a different opinion. He believed that all three of them: Abu Lu'lu'ah, Al-Hurmudhaan and Jufaynah collaborated and teamed up to assassinate his beloved father. But Abu Lu'lu'ah was the one chosen to put the plan in effect. Still, the crime was masterminded by the three men. As a result, `Ubaydelalah grew furious as he contemplated the idea that his father, `Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, was no ordinary man. He was the caliph of the Muslim state. Killing him would not be a mere crime to be committed by an ordinary criminal. There must be several motives and collaborators behind it. That was especially true since the three criminals were nursed bitter hatred and harbored vindictive feelings against Islam and Muslims. That went double for their caliph who conquered their countries and subjected them and their nations to the rule of Muslims. It was only natural therefore for them to commit such a hideous crime.

For three days while his father suffered the pain of the injury, his son was fuming with rage against the devilish perpetrators. Right upon his father's death, `Ubaydelalah did not think twice to avenge his father's death. However, he crossed the line by he killing a girl who had no hand in killing the caliph. No Abu Lu'lu'ah's daughter was undoubtedly the victim of `Ubaidullah's rash action.

When this case was brought before `Uthmaan, he certainly displayed admirable wisdom and subtleness in handling a thorny situation that could have easily given way to sedition and trouble among a nation that was still grieving a heavy loss. Instead, `Uthmaan managed to solve the problem and restore peace and harmony among Muslims.

Conquests in the Life-Time of `Uthmaan:

Rebellion of Azerbaijan and Armenia:

Azerbaijan and Armenia were conquered during the lifetime of `Umar Ibn Al-Khaṯṯaab. There arose a rebellion against the Islamic government after his death. `Uthmaan ordered Waleed Ibn `Uqbah, the governor of Kufah at that time, to crush the rebellion. He sent Islamic forces and regained the territory taken over by the rebels. This happened in the year 26 AH.

During the same period, Mu`awiyah sent an army to Armenia to face the Byzantines. The Muslim army was under the command of Habeeb Ibn Maslamah Al-Fihri. He occupied some of the forts, but Constans II sent a huge army of 80,000 men to face the Muslims. Seeing the situation, Mu`awiyah wrote to `Uthmaan for reinforcement. He ordered Al-Waleed Ibn `Uqbah. He received the Caliph's order when he was returning from Azerbaijan after taking it over from the rebels and immediately sent an army of 8,000 under the command of

Salmaan Ibn Rabee`ah to Armenia. The two armies conquered the whole region of Armenia after defeating the Roman forces. They also conquered some more parts of Asia Minor including Aran and Garjastan. Thus by the end of the 26 AH the territory up to the Caucasus Mountains came under the sway of Islam.

Byzantine Invasion of Alexandria:

In the year 25 AH (645 AC) there was a big rebellion in Alexandria, and in 26 AH, the Byzantine army took possession of the city after a fight with the Muslims. The Muslims wrote to the Caliph asking him to bring `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas back to the rule of the city in order to regain Alexandria. `Uthmaan accepted the plea, and directed `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas to crush the rebellion and beat back the invasion. `Amr again attacked the city, drove the Byzantines out and recovered the port city of Alexandria.

Conquest of Khurasan and Tabrastan:

In 30 AH Sa`eed Ibn Al-`Aas, newly appointed governor of Al-Kufah, marched towards Khurasan with an army in which some prominent figures like Al-Hasan, Al-Husayn, `Abdullaah Ibn `Abbaas, `Abdullaah Ibn `Umar, Az-Zubayr, Hudhayfah Ibn Al-Yamaan, may Allah be pleased with all of them, joined in the expedition. At the same time `Abdullaah Ibn `Aamir, the governor of Basrah, also marched there. Before `Abdullaah Ibn `Aamir reached, Sa`eed Ibn Al-`Aas conquered a number of places including Tabrastan and Jarjan.

In the year 31 AH `Abdullaah Ibn `Aamir again journeyed there after hearing the news of rebellion. Then he conquered the remaining part of Khurasan.

Conquest of North Africa:

For the defense of Egypt it was necessary to drive away the Byzantines from North Africa. During `Umar's caliphate, `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas suggested to the Caliph that he should conquer North Africa, but the Caliph rejected the idea.

When `Abdullaah Ibn Sarh was appointed as a full-rank governor of Egypt, he took permission from the Caliph to advance into the northern territory. In the year 27 AH he went with an army to conquer Tripoli, the main Byzantine fort of North Africa at that time. `Uthmaan also sent a reinforcement from Madeenah which included men like Al-Hasan, Al-Husayn, `Abdullaah Ibn `Umar, `Abdullaah Ibn Az-Zubayr, `Abdullaah Ibn `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas, and `Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn Abi Bakr, may Allah be pleased with all of them. After some disagreements, the inhabitants of Tripoli agreed to negotiate peace and promised to pay the *Jizyah* annually. This victory cleared the way for the advance of Muslims in North Africa and soon they conquered Tunisia and Morocco and a part of Algeria.

The Conquest of Cyprus:

Cyprus is one of the largest islands of the Mediterranean sea and it lies on the eastern side with two mountain chains. Cyprus, which was part of the Byzantine Empire, was an agricultural economy due to its fertile land.

The conquest of Cyprus was carried out by the Mu`awiyah Ibn Abi Sufyaan who invaded it with an army that included a group of the Prophet's Companions. Some of them were: Abu Dharr, `Ubaadah Ibn As-Saamit and his wife Um Haram, Abu Ad-Dard' and Shaddaad Ibn Qays. Mu`awiyah had repeatedly asked `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab to invade the Byzantine forces through the sea because they were so near Hims constituting a threat on Muslims. He said to `Umar: "People in the villages of Hims can hear the dogs barking and the sound of the chicken on the Byzantine side". `Umar then wrote to `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas saying: "Describe to me the sea and those who sail in it." `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas wrote back saying: "I have seen one of Allah's greatest creation (i.e. the sea) being sailed in by a small creation (i.e. men); if it lies stagnant it tears hearts apart, and if it moves and flows it astonishes minds. In it (the sea) certainty diminishes, and doubt inflates. And people (in the sea) are like worms clinging to a branch; if it leans they drown, and if it stands upright they glimmer."

When `Umar read the message he wrote back to Mu`awiyah saying: "I swear to Allah, Who sent Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, with the right guidance, I will never send Muslims to sea, for I have heard that Ash-Shaam sea is very high and every day and night it threatens the earth with drowning. But Allah restrains it! So how could I send Muslims to that tyrant (unbeliever)! The lives of Muslims are much more precious than all that the Byzantines have. So do not ever ask me that again, and remember what I have done to Abi Al-`Alaa'."

This message reflects the Arabs' fear of the sea. `Umar considered that it threatened the earth with drowning every day and night. In any case, `Umar did not want to take the risk of sending Muslims to sea.

When `Uthmaan, may Allah be pleased with him, became Caliph, Mu`awiyah wrote to him asking his permission to invade via the sea and insisted that he approves. Finally, `Uthmaan approved, but he did not make recruitment compulsory. It was voluntary so that if they were defeated no one would blame him. This reflects that he was influenced by `Umar's opinion about the dangers of the sea.

The first Muslim fleet was the one sent to conquer Cyprus in 28 AH under the command of `Abdullaah Ibn Qays. Another fleet from Egypt sailed from Alexandria under the command of `Abdullaah Ibn Sa`d and joined the first fleet in invading Cyprus.

When they arrived at Cyprus, the people of Cyprus made peace with the Muslims. The condition was that they pay 7000 dinars to the Muslims annually and a similar amount to the Byzantines and to fight with the Muslims against their enemies.

Therefore, Cyprus fell easily in the hands of Muslims because its Christian garrison was weak. It is said that `Abdullaah Ibn Qays led 50 battles at sea and no member of his fleet drowned. He was killed while he was on a mission exploring a Byzantine harbor. He sailed in a reconnaissance boat, and when they reached the harbor, the enemy was able to recognize him, and they killed him.

During this conquest Umm Haram Bint Mil<u>h</u>aan Al-Ansaariyyah, the wife of `Ubadah Ibn As-Saamit lost her life exactly as the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, had predicted. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, used to honor her by visiting her, and sleeping at her house. One day the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was visiting her and he slept for a while, then he woke up smiling and said: "I dreamt that some people amongst my followers were sailing on the green sea in Allah's Cause, and they were like kings on thrones." Umm Haraam said: "O Messenger of Allah! Pray for me to be one of them". The Prophet said to her: "You are amongst them". Then he slept again, and when he woke up he smiled. Umm Haraam asked him: "O Prophet of Allah, what makes you smile?" He said: "I dreamt that some people amongst my followers were sailing on the sea like kings". She then told him again: "O Prophet! Pray for me to be one of them". He said: "You will be amongst the first group of them." Later on she married `Ubadah Ibn As-Saamit, and she sailed to Cyprus. When they reached the shore, she mounted her riding animal, which threw her down breaking her neck and she died. Al-Waaqidi and Abu Ma`shar say that this took place in 34 AH

The Battle of Dhaat As-Sawaari (31 AH – 652 AC):

Three years after the Muslims seized Cyprus, the Byzantines mustered an unprecedented large fleet comprising of 500 ships to face the Muslims who were under the command of `Abdullaah Ibn Sa`d Ibn Abi Sarh. He added around 200 Egyptian ships to the Muslim fleet and prepared an army of courageous men. The two parties did not fight until the two ships became close to each other, then a strong wind struck them and the Muslims anchored at shore. They tied the ships to each other near Alexandria and the battle broke out between the two sides. Men fought fiercely and a huge number were killed on both sides to the extent that the sea turned red and the dead bodies became jetsam. It was a day on which Muslims showed great valor and perseverance till the Byzantines failed in facing up to them and were defeated. Their commander fled to Syrcause, the largest city in Sicily. When the Muslims inhabited Cyprus, they made it quite prosperous and bustling with life.

Uthman's Pioneering acts:

Al`askari says: `Uthmaan was the first to give people plots of land to cultivate (funded by the public treasury); the first to lower his voice in *Takbeer* (saying Allahu Akbar); the first to perfume mosques with incense; the first to order the pronouncement of the first *Adhaan* to *Salaah* in *Jum`ah* prayer; the first to give salaries to *Mu'adhins* (prayer callers); the first to stammer while giving a Khutbah, he said: "O people! Things are usually hard at the beginning and there are still many days to come. So if I live I will give the complete speech, I am not good at delivering speeches but I will learn, *Insha-Allah.*" (Narrated by Ibn Sa`d.)

He, may Allah be pleased with him, was the first to assume leadership in the lifetime of his mother; the first to appoint a sheriff; the first to migrate with his family to Madeenah and he was the first to standardize a special way for reciting the Qur'an.

Official Manuscript of the Glorious Qur'an:

One of the magnificent services `Uthmaan did to Islam was to safeguard any possible change in the codex of the Qur'an. After the conquests by the Muslims, hundreds of thousands of non-Arabs, whose mother tongue was not Arabic, accepted Islam because of its teachings. Hudhayfah, may Allah be pleased with him, one of the prominent Companions of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, went for *Jihad* during that time, and noticed many differences in the manner of recitation (*Qira'aat*) of the Qur'an. The Syrians recited in a way different from that of Kufis while the Kufis differed from Basris and so on. As a matter of fact these differences were due to the differences in the way of writing Arabic. Seeing this condition, Hudhayfah reported the matter to Caliph `Uthmaan on his return from the *Jihad*, and suggested that the codex of Madeenah should be regarded as authentic, i.e. the Glorious Qur'an which was written and compiled in Book form during the time of Abu Bakr As-Sideeq, may Allah be pleased with him, and was kept with the Mother of the Believers, Hafsah, may Allah be pleased with her.

`Uthmaan took that Book from Hafsah and canonized the codex of Madeenah. He asked Zayd Ibn Thabit, may Allah be pleased with her, the person who wrote it during the time of Abu Bakr, to make copies of the same with the help of some other Companions like `Abdullaah Ibn Az-Zubayr and Sa`eed Ibn Al-`Aas and others. Then he ordered all other copies to be burnt and destroyed throughout the State.

Those people who earned their living in the provinces as the receptacles and expositors of the sacred text were not pleased with this act. It has been discussed before that such persons criticised `Uthmaan for burning inauthentic texts. However for this great service `Uthmaan is famous as the Jaami`ul-Qur'an (the compiler of the Qur'an).

Extension of the Prophet's Mosque:

The mosque of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was too small for the increasing Muslim population. `Uthmaan bought a big plot of land in the neighborhood of the mosque, but some of the persons living in the nearby houses did not want to leave their places even for reasonable compensation. For four years no new construction was built. One day he gave an effective lecture after Jum`ah prayer, and the people agreed to donate their places. Then . the mosque was extended in the year

`Uthmaan's Trial:

Despite the fact that discussing the issue of internal strife that happened during and after the era of `Uthmaan fills every

Muslim and true believer, with disgust and utter resentment, we feel it necessary, in the course of shedding light on that early period of Islamic Call, to reveal facts about this strife that shook the entire Muslim community.

Though many have been written on this subject, they are wrapped up in contradiction that mar their authenticity. Nonetheless, we will try to deal with all these materials with objectivity in order to know the real cause of this strife and its negative effects on the image of Islam and Muslims.

First of all, we must admit the fact that this strife did not materialize all of a sudden; it can't be described as a fortuitous event, rather it was a product of different kinds of incidents and occasions accumulated and later became interwoven. The starting point is the insemination of certain ideas in minds, then they transformed into devilish schemes which posed as a time bomb whose explosion at a later stage wreaked havoc on the innocent lives.

It was very unfortunate of `Uthmaan that his caliphate era witnessed the end of the glorious decade of Muslim Nation and the beginning of a new era in the history of Muslim community. This period, almost thirty years – starting from the Prophet's *Hijrah* till the half of `Uthmaan's caliphate's ere – witnessed overwhelming change in the structure of the society; generation passed by to be replaced by a new generation lower than the previous one in terms of faith, in grasping the sense of Islamic creed, showing compliance with Islamic teachings and in performing all religions ordinances. But the most surprising point is that this decline coincided with glory and blessing galore pouring on Muslim Nation form here and there in addition to the spread of Islam across the globe, covering Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, the Levant, Egypt, the whole Africa, Persian land, Armenia and some Mediterranean Islands. How could such a powerful Muslim Nations, with all its vast lands and immense population (Arabs and non-Arabs) suffered such a setback which was nothing to be hair-raising in the previous two golden eras of Abu Bakr and `Umar, who were characterized with resolution and decisiveness.

\`Uthmaan Ibn \`Affaan, in his period, with due respect to his overrated virtues of piety and religiousness in addition to his great role in the course of spreading the message of Islam, had different approach to politics and administration. Most people believe that the way he handled many challenges that faced him led to escalation of problems and the aggravation of turmoils that shook the entire populace. In fact, what we can say here is that it was very unfortunate of \`Uthmaan to find himself at the helm of the nation during that turbulent period in the history of Muslim Nation.

Main Causes:

Part of what the people cite as the main causes of the strife was the easy-going attitude adopted by \`Uthmaan in his dealing with people. This gave some people of weak faith a golden chance to express sigh of relief after \`Umar's era, characterized by toughness, leaving no room for concession or dispensation.

For instance, in a stark contrast to what was used to in the time of \`Umar, many Companions, in the time of \`Uthmaan, were given chance to emigrate, to do whatever they liked, and were given an unrestricted right to own property. When some people complained against the policy of \`\`Umar (forbidding the erudite among Qurayshi Emigrants to move outside the capital unless by permission and with a definite period), he replied in defiance: "Let every one know that my policy, in the course of governing Islamic Nation is to apply gradation system that resembles growth phases of camels: First stage, "*Al-Thaniy*" (in its third year), "*Al-Jaz\`*" (before that stage), then "*Al-Rubaa\`i*" (than develop four teeth), then "*Al-Sudays*" (in its sixth year), then "*Al-Baazil*" (in its ninth year), this is the highest stage of development for camels nothing after that but decline in growth. Lo! Islam has been threatened! Lo! The Quraysh now show more interest in wealth than anything else. But for me, I will never allow that as long as I'm still

`Alive."

However, at the time of `Uthmaan, he showed too much leniency that made people got enslaved by material allurement, and this led to having among Muslims some segments that have no relation to Islam whatsoever. This signaled the starting point of having seed of dissension sprout and the soil fertile for planting discord among Muslims.

In this regard At-Tabari says: "No sooner had ``Umar passed away than Qurayshi Emigrants (some of them) began showing signs of relation, whereas during the time of `Umar, people were not allowed to leave Madeenah. He used to say: "What worries me most is dispersion of Muslims across the border". Even in participating in battles, they would not venture that without seeking the permission of `Umar (especially for the erudite among the Emigrants). He would say to anyone of them: "You are well aware of the virtuous nature of the Prophetic battles. Nowadays, in fighting in Allah's Cause, you need to forsake worldly materials". However, when `Uthmaan got at the helm of power, people forgot about all these noble teachings; hence problems ensue and `Uthmaan's era became more enjoyable to some people of hidden motives".

Thus, notable Companions left Madeenah to regional towns and settled there to form money-oriented religious aristocracy, and most of these important figures gained fame and ground the moment they set their feet on the new soil. Thus, they gained supporters among people hunting for any chance to seize power or gave influential image in the sight of the Caliph. Had `Uthmaan followed the same pattern laid down by `Umar, those people would not be able to poke their nose into the affairs of the Caliphate and pose threat to the Caliph himself. This threat reached its peak when hundreds of delegates rushed to the capital shouting slogans for the Caliph, `Uthmaan, to be ousted and be replaced with other people who also had interest in the post. For instance, people of Basrah called for Az-Zubayr Ibn Al-`Awwaam to be made Caliph, while people of Kufah called for Talhah Ibn `Ubaydellaah ...

etc.

Part of what people took against `Uthmaan is his absolute and unchecked giving in to the persistent demand raised by people in several governorates for their Emirs to be removed without any tangible reason save their desire to quell flames of dissension. This exaggerated lenient approach led people to have no more respect for their leaders; this, of course, was an alarm bell for the danger lying horizon for the Caliph himself. Eventually they called upon him to step down. For instance, to show to how extent `Uthmaan tried all what he could to please his opponents. He once said to the people of Kufah: "Now I have chosen for you as a ruler a person of your choice after dismissing Sa`eed (Sa`eed Ibn Al-`Aas). By Allah I will do whatever I can to reform you, to the last drop of my patience".

But despite this amicable gesture from the Caliph to rectify their erring or rather reshape their manners, these people persisted in their naughtiness and seemed hell-bent on making the situation worse for the Caliph.

Moreover, `Uthmaan, given his old age, also gave in to the pressures levied on him by his family by appointing them into many key posts, especially by making them governors of many Islamic provinces like Egypt, Kufah, Al-Basrah in addition to the Levant which had been already occupied by Mu`awiyah, since the time of `Umar. To compound matters, he did not introduce some sort of checks on them as was the situation in his predecessors' era. They enjoyed so much privilege that some of them would deliberate important matters and issue decision on them without even notifying the Caliph. To all this, `Uthmaan showed strange acquiescent nature that exposed him to the danger of being challenged by the public, as clear in the following dialogue:

`Uthmaan said to `Ali: "Why blaming me for appointing

Ibn `Aamir, one of my relatives?[2]

In reply to that, `Ali said: "Whomever `Umar appointed as governor in provinces would also be put under close check, if he found anyone of them erring, he would never leave him unpunished. You have never done such thing, you are too lenient on your relatives."

`Uthmaan said, "They are also your relatives".

`Ali replied: "I give them no privilege above being relatives".

`Uthmaan: "Have you forgotten that `Umar mad Mu`awiyah a governor in a province and never ousted him throughout his Caliphate's era? So I did the same."

`Ali: "You are right but I'd like to remind you that Mu`awiyah always held `Umar in awe more than Umar's lad, Yarfa', did !"

`Uthmaan, "Yes, I know that."

`Ali: "If you know that, why then give Mu`awiyah free rein to do whatever he likes, issuing decisions in your name and you acquiesce in that?'

In addition to all what he said as factors that led to the escalation of the strife, there are other reasons, such as:

A very controversial doctrine introduced by a virtuous Companion, Abu Dharr Al-Ghifaari, concerning the distribution of wealth, sparked off a frenzied debate between him and Mu`awiyah. While Abu Dharr adopted a socialist-like approach, claiming that the wealth should be equally distributed among all Muslims, for they owned this wealth, Mu`awiyah, the then governor of the Levant, opposed that view raising the slogan "Allah is the Owner of all things"!

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[2] He was `Uthmaan's cousin appointed as governor of Al-Baṣrah in the year 29 AH.

To this Abu Dharr counter-argued: "This sounds as someone who wants to manipulates the whole thing! Who says that Allah is not the Owner of all things?! But what I'm saying is that the state's wealth belongs to all Muslims and they should all have equal share or right to it." That is why Abu Dharr never supported the idea of amassing wealth, rather he would go for the idea that having a daily sustenance would suffice a Muslim, nothing more save what one reserves to spend in Allah's Cause. In supporting his argument, he used to cite the following verse:

"وَالَّذِينَ يَكْنِزُونَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلاَ يُنفِقُونَهَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَبَشِّرْهُم بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيـــمٍ"
(التوبة: ٣٤)

"And there are those who bury gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah: announce unto them a most grievous penalty." (At-Tawbah: 34)

And he used to call upon the well-off class of people: "Give a due consideration to the poor (by giving them charity)".

It should not be any wonder that such an argument claimed many support among the poor class of the society, this made them too demanding and a pain in the neck of the rich who, having their backs to the wall, had no choice than to complain to the Levant's governor, Mu`awiyah, who sent Abu Dharr back to Madeenah. Upon reaching there and confronting the Caliph, he was asked by `Uthmaan: "What have you done to make Levantines complain a lot about you? Have you been too sharp-tongued?"

Abu Dharr replied: "Only what I said is that people should not be given free rein to amass wealth to the detriment of others, under the slogan of "Allah is the Owner of all things".

`Uthmaan thereupon said to Abu Dharr: "My main task in this post of caliphate is to observe the obligation enjoined on me by Almighty Allah and to see that people also perform their duties, but not to impose an ascetic style of life on people, only what I can do is to advice them to be moderate in spending." Being dissatisfied with the answer, Abu Dharr sought the Caliph's permission to leave Madeenah. Not only that he was granted this permission, he was also honored with a befitting entourage that comprised of more than twenty camels and two servants.

Thus, the noble Companion left the Sacred City of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and settled in a place called Ar-Rabadhah, one of the Madeenan suburbs, where he later died after two years, in the year 32 AH.

In citing this incident as one of the main factors that led to the escalation of the strife, we have two points supporting this fact: First of all, Though Abu Dharr voice his own opinion on the distribution of wealth and left, the man really left behind huge numbers of supporters (the poor class) who found it an opportunity to vex their angers against people who were given to opulence and amassing wealth to the detriment of the majority of the populace. Hence, this incident drove the whole atmosphere to the boiling point in the sense that several revolutions were staged against the province's governors basked in cream of wealth, and this eventually led to a huge uprising against the Caliph himself who acquiesced in this extravagant habits. The second point is that this idea (fair distribution of wealth) was not a carbon copy of someone's imagination or say that he was just reiterating an opinion already voiced by a Persian man, `Abdullaah Ibn Saba', rather, it was a refraction of rays of Islamic noble teachings laid down by the great tutor, Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

So it should not be a wonder to hear a virtuous Companion like Abu Dharr Al-Ghifaari voicing a personal opinion that greatly moves along the line with the teachings of

Islam and backing it with convincing proofs from the Glorious Qur'an !!

Who Is `Abdullaah Ibn Saba'? And What Is His Relation to the Sedition?

As for the first question, he is said to be a Jew from (the tribe of H̲imyar. His mother was a black slave, that is why he was called 'Ibn as-Sawaad' (the son of blackness). `Abdullaah Ibn Saba' embraced Islam during the rule of `Uthmaan, yet strong doubts surrounded his conversion. A modern researcher stated that his conversion to Islam was instigated by a clandestine group aiming at either of two things: dividing Muslims as regards religion or politics for his mission combined belief in both nomination of the caliph "*Wisiyyah*" and the return of the Prophet "*Raj`ah*". The former requires that it is none other than `Ali who should be appointed a caliph and that `Uthmaan should give up the caliphate by rebellion against him. The latter means the belief that Prophet Muh̲ammad will come back again to life just as Jesus, peace be upon him, will.

As for his connection with the sedition, it was the strongest, most serious and influential in respect to the incidents and developments of the sedition. Ibn Saba' started off in Basrah where he propagated his wicked mission among all groups of people. Among his sayings which constitute the basis of his mission are: "Each Prophet has *Wasiyy* (a nominated successor) and `Ali is the successor nominated by Muh̲ammad, so who, then, does more wrong than one who does not abide by the nomination of the Prophet?" and "`Uthmaan illegitimately seized it (the caliphate), so you should revolt against this, starting by laying accusations against your leaders and pretending that you are enjoining good and forbidding evil." Ibn Saba' also attacked the great companions; he was the first to accuse Abu Bakr and 'Umar and degrade them. Yet, `Ali dissociated himself from Ibn Saba' and accused him of lying against Allah and His Messenger. Ibn Saba', however, continued his deviate claims to the extent that he claimed, "It is strange for one to believe that Jesus will descend and deny that Muhammad will return" deceiving people by searching for proof (for his claim) in Allah's saying,

"إِنَّ الَّذِي فَرَضَ عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لَرَادُّكَ إِلَى مَعَادٍ." (القصص: ٨٥)

"Verily He Who ordained the Qur'an for thee, will bring thee back to the Place of Return." (Al-Qasas: 85)

Once the governor of Basrah knew about his claims, he dismissed him. Ibn Saba' therefore headed for Kufah where he resumed his destructive activity. Yet, soon the Kufah's governor dismissed him, too. He next went to Syria. By that time, he already poisoned the atmosphere in Iraq spreading such evil thoughts that deeply affected many people whose faith was still frail even though they were Muslims.

In Syria, Ibn Saba' could hardly do anything. That was because Syria was under a strong, intelligent and far-sighted governor, namely Mu`awiyah Ibn Abi Sufyaan. Ibn Saba' continued his devilish journey to Egypt where he found a fertile soil for his lies. There he incited the public against the caliph and aroused bitter feelings in their breasts against him. The absence of Egypt's governor `Abdullaah Ibn Sa`d Ibn Abi Sarh, who was preoccupied with fighting the Romans and the people of Nubia, made his task in Egypt an easy one. Perhaps the fact that Ibn Abi Sarh was callous in collecting taxes and asking Egyptians to pay more than the obligatory sum played an important role in stirring hatred and resentment against him.

In propagandizing his ideas, Ibn Saba' made use of two men from Quraysh: Abu Hudhayfah and Muhammad Ibn Abi Bakr. The former was hostile to `Uthmaan because he did not appoint him for any administrative office though `Uthmaan took upon himself the responsibility of fostering and raising him after the death of his father. But why did the caliph refuse to confer on him a governmental office? Some narrators point: "This is because he was not an eligible candidate for authority in the eyes of the caliph who knew that his foster-son had once drunk wine. He (`Uthmaan) openly said to him: 'Had you been eligible, I would have appointed you, but you are not.' " As for the latter, he closely related to `Ali Ibn Abi Taalib who married his mother, Asmaa' Bint Abi `Umays, after the death of Abu Bakr. Thus, he was raised in the house of his stepfather. Ibn Abi Bakr's enthusiasm for `Ali therefore was the reason why he supported Ibn Saba' and teamed up with against the caliph.

That way, the front opposing the caliph was stretching even though their activities remained covert until then (i.e. 34 AH). These activities took the form of mutual messages between the indignant persons here and there which included censure of the caliph and his officers in all provinces and mentioned certain attitudes that they regarded inconvenient. The voice of their censure gradually grew louder and was frequently discussed by people until it reached the caliph himself. `Uthmaan, in turn, delegated four of the great companions to discuss these issues and search for the real reasons behind complaints filed by inhabitants of different provinces. He sent Usamah Ibn Zayd to Basrah, Muhammad Ibn Maslamah to Kufah, `Abdullaah Ibn 'Umar to Syria, and `Ammaar Ibn Yasir to Egypt. The first three delegates returned to the capital and found that there was nothing to justify these complaints, but `Ammaar stayed in Egypt and its governor, Ibn Abi Sarh, sent to `Uthmaan informing him that `Ammaar was drawn to some people in Egypt and that they managed to sway him to their side. These people include `Abdullaah Ibn as-Sawdaa', Kinaanah Ibn Bishr and others.

The caliph wanted to make sure himself that the conclusion his three delegates reached was true and to clear himself before his Lord and his subjects from any oppression that could have been inflicted on any of the people. Therefore, he issued an official announcement to be delivered to all provinces in which he called upon all those who were wronged or had a complaint to come to Makkah during pilgrimage time to present their complaints before the caliph so that he would retaliate on their behalf against the oppressor and restore to them their rights. In 34 AH, people came to Makkah for the pilgrimage, finished their rituals and then returned to their provinces. None of them stayed to file a complaint.

However, it was not a matter of individual complaints or personal incidents of oppression which could be settled, so as to free souls from grudges, let hearts rest. so that the Muslim public would be satisfied by the administration of the *Ummah* affairs. The situation was much more dangerous than that, because a group of those who were hostile to `Uthmaan from Kufah, Basrah and Egypt reached Madeenah for a secretly-contrived conspiracy. They explained their plan saying: "We want to mention to the caliph certain ideas which we indoctrinate people to believe. We will then return to the people and claim that he admitted them, and did not give them up or repent. Next we will dress as pilgrims, besiege him and depose him. If he refuses, we will kill him." That was the exact scenario that took place.

The caliph managed to find out about the intentions of those rebels through two persons who were close to them and briefed the caliph on their thoughts. The Companions of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, advised `Uthmaan to kill them in order to rid the *Ummah* of their danger and nip the sedition in the bud on the ground of the saying of the Prophet: *"Whoever calls for himself or for someone else while people are under the leadership of one Imam, he is cursed by Allah, so kill him."* Nevertheless, `Uthmaan, as was his habit, treated them with leniency and did not listen the advice of the Companions who thought they ought to be handled with more firmness. Instead, he said, "No, we will forgive them and inform them of our efforts. We will never punish them unless they commit a punishable crime or declare disbelief."

As regards the issues and questions they implanted in the hearts of people and thought the caliph would be unable to answer and so be forced to admit that he was wrong, `Uthmaan discussed them and persuaded them that his conduct was valid. They thus accepted the majority of his views and kept silent as to few of them. These issues are as follows:

They said, "He did not shorten the prayer, when traveling, though it used to be shortened during the lifetimes of the Prophet and his two Companions (Abu Bakr and 'Umar)." `Uthmaan answered, "I arrived at a city where my family resides so I stayed and completed the prayer." They were content with his answer.

They argued, "He nominated a certain land for for the camels of *Ṣadaqah* to graze on though the Prophet and his two Companions did not do so." He answered that (he did so) so that the camels of people should not mingle with them and thus compete with them in grazing. He also added that he had only two camels for the journey of *Hajj* though when he was first appointed as caliph he was the greatest owner of camels and sheep amongst the Arabs. They were satisfied with this answer.

They said that he collected the Qur'an in one *Mushaf* (i.e. book) and ordered that all other *Mushafs* be burnt. He answered, "Truly the Qur'an is one (book), revealed by the One (Allah), and in doing, so I was a follower and not a heretic." They were content with his answer.

They said that he permitted Al-Hakam Ibn Abi Al-`Aas — his uncle — to return to Makkah whom the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, exiled to Al-Taa'if, because he was one of the most hostile pagans to the Prophet in Makkah before migration. He remained in exile during the rule of AbuBakr. They saw no grounds for `Uthmaan to permit him to return (to Makkah). He answered: "I interceded with Allah's Messenger for his sake and he accepted my intercession. Yet, the Prophet, peace and blessing be upon him, had died before Al-Hakam's return, and Abu Bakr and 'Umar refused to accept a report transmitted by only one person. So when I came to office, I allow him to come back." They were satisfied with the answer, too.

They said that he appointed young people particularly from his own family. He answered that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, appointed Zayd Ibn Haarithah and after him appointed Zayd's son, Usamah, as commander of an army which included many of the great Companions. Some people argued with him about that at that time. They also accepted this answer.

They said that he conferred on `Abdullaah Ibn Abi Sarh —his foster-brother — one fifth of the fifth to be allocated to the public treasury. He answered that both Abu Bakr and 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with them, behaved in the same way. But he got the money back from Ibn Abi Sarh when he knew that the soldiers disliked it. The people were pleased with this behavior.

They said: "The caliph loves his family and confers on them plentiful wealth." He answered: "I love them but I am not biased towards them thus doing injustice (to anybody) nor do I give them what is not rightfully theirs. I only give them from my own property and I do not deem it lawful for myself or any other person to take any of the properties of Muslims." The caliph added: "I used to spend generously during the lifetimes of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with them, while I was still stingy at that time, then how do you blame me when I grew old and conferred on my family what I owned?"

Finally, they said, "The caliph permitted the great Companions to go to different provinces such as Iraq, Syria and Egypt where they bought and possessed properties though his predecessor, ‘Umar, prevented them from leaving the capital lest people should be tempted to follow their example and thus be occupied with trade and the amassing of wealth." This stance is in conformity with the lenient and kind character of the caliph in dealing with people. `Uthmaan answered them saying: "These lands have been shared by their brothers, the helpers and immigrants, when they were conquered. So whoever stays anywhere in those lands would be an example for its people to follow." They also kept silent without agreeing with him concerning this issue.

Those remarks and oppositions to `Uthmaan's policy and conduct in administering the affairs of the *Ummah* particularly with regard to appointing his relatives in public offices and conferring many gifts on them undoubtedly constituted the main reasons behind people's exasperation with `Uthmaan's authority. That was made excellent use of by the rebels to incite people and arouse their feelings against him.

Although that discussion officially ended with these people's silence, the caliph realized that their attitudes would have some repercussions and that he should wisely handle the matter before the situation deteriorated. He thus sent to his governors in the different regions asking them to meet him during the pilgrimage time to discuss the issue.

The Caliph's Meeting with the Governors of Provinces:

According to At-Tabari and others, `Uthmaan sent to the governors of the provinces: `Abdullaah Ibn `Amir, Mu`awiyyah Ibn Abi Sufyyaan, and `Abdullaah Ibn Sa`d Ibn Abi Sarh. On their arrival, `Uthmaan asked Sa`eed Ibn Al-`As and `Amr Ibn Al-`As to participate in the consultation. `Uthmaan, then, wondered: "What are the reason behind all these complaints? I am afraid lest these complaints should turn out to be founded, which, in turn, would disgrace me personally." They said: "Haven't you sent them your messengers? Haven't we told you the affairs of the people? Haven't they come back and no one has spoken to them? By Allah, they are neither truthful nor loyal? We do not know the source of these complaints? You can judge anyone according to them? They are merely false statements that no one can rely on." He said: "What is your opinion?" Sa`eed Ibn Al-`As said, "This was all secretly fabricated. Then, people, who do not know the reality, are to spread it amongst people." `Uthmaan said: "What is the solution then?" He replied: "Bring the persons who spread it and kill them." `Abdullaah Ibn Sa`d said: "Take from people what they owe you after you give them their rights for this is better than leaving them." Mu`aawiyyah said: "You have appointed me (as a governor) on some people from whom you can only expect what is good." `Uthmaan asked: "What do you say, `Amr?" `Amr answered: "It seems to me that you have dealt with them leniently and so encouraged them to do so. You should follow in the footsteps of your two companions by behaving harshly when it is necessary and behaving leniently in proper times. Wicked people should be handled harshly, while leniency is the recompense of good people. You, however, deal with both parties alike, i.e. with leniency."

Thus, everyone who was consulted saw that `Uthmaan had to deal strictly with those people who instigated sedition. Owing to his tender nature, `Uthmaan did not listen to their opinions. Instead, he commanded them to give those people their rights, to excuse them, and to forcefully combat them if Allah's rights were violated.

Now the question is: Did those governors abide by `Uthmaan's commands? The answer is no. They neither prevented people from revolting against the Caliph, nor did they give people their rights by explaining to them the bad consequences of the revolt. Further, they did not protect Allah's rights for, by leaving those people on the loose, they would disobey the Caliph and spread disorder in the provinces.

Each governor returned back to his province. Mu`aawiyyah, who realized the difficult situation `Uthmaan was in, offered the latter to come join him in Syria. `Uthmaan, however, refused to leave Madeenah, where the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was buried. Mu`aawiyyah, alternatively, offered `Uthmaan to send some Syrian soldiers to defend him against the expected danger. Yet, `Uthmaan rejected the idea fearing that foreign soldiers may annoy people of Madeenah.

Another question may be raised now, which is: Would it not have been better for `Uthmaan to accept these two offers in order to escape danger and to block the avenues that might lead to evil? `Uthmaan's stance, in fact, was excusable on account of his good character and kind nature which led him to believe that people would not violate their pledge of allegiance to their Caliph. The situation therefore paved the way for the violation of the Caliph's rights, which ushers in what we call the last stage of `Uthmaan's caliphate.

The Siege of Caliph's House and His Martyrdom:

In the middle of year 35 AH, some indigenes of these three cities, namely Egypt, Basrah and Al-Kufah decided to march to Madeenah in order to perform the yearly *Hajj*.

And in Shaawaal of the same year about 600 or 1000 Egyptian men set for *Hajj* under the leadership of Al- Ghafiqi Ibn Harb Al-`Kki. And no doubt Ibn As-Sawdaa', the man behind this sedition, was with them. The number of the Basarites reached the aforementioned figure, and their leader was H̱arqoos Ibn Zuhayr As-Sa`di. Also the people of Kufah came with nearly the same number of their Basarite neighbors, and they were led by `Amr Ibn Al-Asamm. But, their hidden mission was as follows: to request from the caliph to remove the governors of their various cities, and if he refused he should resign as caliph; if he did not do so willingly, they would achieve their purpose by force.

In fact they disagreed on whom the new Caliph would be as each group had a different person in mind, which they concealed from the other groups. For instance, the Egyptians wanted `Ali to become the Caliph, while the Basarites wanted Ṯalẖah Ibn `Ubaydullah. The people of Kufah preferred Az-Zubayr Ibn Al-`Awwaam as the Caliph. According to At-Ṯabari, every group believed that the success of this mission would be to its favor, and that its choice would be the next Caliph.

The Egyptians insisted that the Caliph should replace their governor Ibn Abi Sarh with someone else. To prevent the occurrence of sedition, `Uthmaan granted their request and appointed Muhammad Ibn Abi Bakr as the governor of Egypt. So the Egyptians returned to their home. In this respect, many historians, like At-Tabari, state: As soon as the Egyptian delegates led by Muhammad Ibn Abi Bakr set off to return to Egypt, they saw someone riding towards them. He continued accelerating until they noticed him, suspected him and arrested him. So they maltreated him in order to expose the purpose of his mission. When they searched him, they found that he had a letter with `Uthmaan's seal. The letter was sent to the governor of Egypt `Abdullaah Ibn Sa`d Ibn Abi As- Sarh. The Caliph ordered him to arrest the delegates on reaching Egypt, and to kill all of them.

This unbelievable event was enough to sow anxiety and hatred in the hearts of people. So they returned to Madeenah. Their Iraqi comrades had not returned because the last part of their plot had not finished. Thus, the Egyptians came to the Caliph and showed him the letter. `Uthmaan said to them: "Two men witnesses should be provided to testify to this, or I swear by Allah, the One who has no associate, that I did not write, dictate or know anything about this letter. In order to show his innocence, he explained to them that the letter might have been forged: "You know that someone else could have written this letter and forge the seal." At this point, they asked him to present his scribe Marawaan Ibn Al-Hakam, whom they were sure wrote the letter. But the Caliph refused lest they may assassinate him. They insisted with their demand, and the Caliph also insisted on his stance, and the situation became awkward. These people lay siege to the house of `Uthmaan and prevented him from going out even to lead people in *Salaah*.

The letter, which the Caliph sent to the people of the cities before things got out of hand, read: In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. To start with, Almighty Allah sent Muhammad with the truth, and as bearer of glad tidings and as a warner. He delivered the Message Allah sent down to him, and passed away after accomplishing his mission. He left behind Allah's Book (the Glorious Qur'an) which makes clear what is lawful and what is forbidden, and explains the predestined things. The Prophet implemented Allah's Law upon those who liked it or not. Then the tenure of Abu Bakr and `Umar came, and they did the same thing. I was nominated by the council of consultants (*Ash-Shura*) without my request for the post of caliph; I was selected with the consensus of the consultants. I followed the Prophet's Tradition and not my own whims; I was guided by the Qur'an and not by fabricating my own ideology. But to my surprise, I was attacked and condemned without offending. I have never approved of anything that the Qur'an rejects. They opposed me without any evidence or reason. The insurgents blamed me of doing things done by my predecessors and approved by learned people of Madeenah, which is no doubt the best.

I endured this situation for years although I could see and hear all movements and reactions. Later they continue to demolish the rulings of Allah and transgress against us while we are beside the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, his sacred Mosque and in the land of *Hijrah* (Madeenah). As usual the Arabs have become loyal to them. They are like the confederates in the battle of Al-Ahzaab (the confederates), and they are about to invade us. So whoever finds himself able to join us, should join us.

As soon as the letter of relief reached all the provinces, troops began to arrive at the Capital (Al-Madeenah) to end (you wrote lift the siege from the house of the Caliph. Mu`awiyah sent an army under the command of Habeeb Ibn Masalamh Al-Fihri; and Ibn Abi Sarh sent troops led by Mu`awiyah Ibn Hudayj As-Sukooni; while those of Kufah were led by Al-Qa`qaa` Ibn `Amr and At-Tameemiyy.

In Madeenah, the young people like Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn, `Abdullaah Ibn Az-Zubayr and others hastened to protect the Caliph and prevent the insurgents form reaching the caliph and his family. Food and water were secretly brought to the Caliph's house. The siege took as long as twenty days, in which Madeenah was thrown into confusion, and controlled by the insurgents.

When the period of *Hajj* was over and support came from Madeenah in favor of the Caliph, this made things difficult for the insurgents. So they decided on this ground to execute their mission immediately before things got out of hand and before were overpowered by the allied forces supporting the Caliph. They tried to break into the Caliph's house, but failed because of the resistance of the *Ansaar* and the *Muhajireen*. Then the insurgents decided to burn `Uthmaan's house. They climbed the walls and attacked him while he was reciting the Glorious Qur'an silently. Muhammad Ibn Abi Bakr did not hurt the caliph, but Al-Ghafiqi Ibn Harb immediately hit `Uthmaan with an axe he was holding. Then anther one struck him with his sword. On seeing this ugly scene, the Caliph's wife, Naa'ilah tried to protect him, but the sword chopped off her fingers. One of the insurgents ultimately put an end to the Caliphs life by striking him. The insurgents robbed the Caliph's house and the *Baitul-Maal*.

This event took place on Friday, 18th Dhul-Hijjah, 35 A.H (656 AC).

These evil men only allowed the people to bury the Commander of the Faithful in secret. Then his decent and clean body was finally laid to rest at night and his burial was attended by a few mourners.

This unfortunate and painful incidence brought an end to the life of the third Rightly-Guided Caliph, `Uthmaan Ibn `Affaan, at 80 years of age. It was undoubtedly an abundant life of one of the revered Companions, one of the pious early Muslims who strove in Allah's Cause with his soul, money and his utmost service and self- sacrifice. To justify this event was nothing but pain felt by all the Muslims. Its effect is still remembered in the Muslim world today.

`Uthmaan's martyrdom closed the first chapter of the grave and heavy violence that erupted among the early Muslims. It also opened another file for this violence, which caused disruption among the Muslims and the unrest continued to the advent of 36 AH.

If one should comment on this painful end of one of the most prominent men of Islam, one will no doubt cry that these evil insurgents had committed an enormity and killed a soul who should not have been killed except with the course of justice. They are sinful for what they did, and they will be questioned by Allah concerning more sins that occurred through their evil acts and deeds. For they caused the death of elite of the Companions of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, such as Talhah, Az-Zubayr, `Ali and many. Others who were killed during the continuous conflicts resulted in the shedding of much blood which happened during the tenure of the fourth Caliph; `Ali Ibn Abi Taalib.

علي بن أبي طالب رضي الله عنه

`Ali Ibn Abi <u>T</u>aalib

may Allah be pleased with him

"Are you not content to stand to me as Haroon (Aaron) stood to Moosa (Moses), except that there is no Prophet after me."

Prophet Mu<u>h</u>ammad ﷺ

- Name and Lineage
- His Personal Appearance
- His Embracing of Islam
- *Hadiths* on His Virtues
- `Ali's Exegesis of the Qur'an
- Some of His Wise Sayings
- Some of `Ali's Wise Sayings, Sermons and Moral Values
- Some Merits of the Commander of Faithful
- A Brief Sketch of `Ali's Private Life, Islamic Legal Rulings and Words
- The *Hadiths* Narrated in Connection with the Kharijites
- `Ali, May Allah Be Pleased With Him, Takes over
- Revenge
- Dismissing the Governors
- The Situation between `Ali and Mu`awiyah Flares up
- The Battle of Al-Jamal (the Camel)
- The Aftermath of Al-Jamal Battle
- The Preparation for the Battle of Sifeen
- The Battle of Siffeen
- The Arbitration
- The Kharijites
- The Final Phase of `Ali's Caliphate
- The Death of the Commander of the Faithful

Name and Lineage:

His name is `Ali Ibn Abi Taalib (whose name was `Abdu Manaaf), Ibn `Abdel Muttalib (whose name was Shaybah), Ibn Haashim (whose name was Al-Mugheerah), Ibn Qusayy (whose name was Zayd), Ibn Kilaab, Ibn Murrah, Ibn Ka`b, Ibn Lu'yy, Ibn Ghaalib, Ibn Fihr, Ibn Maalik, Ibn Nadr, Ibn Kinaanah. He was also known as Abu Turaab (the father of dust), a name given to him by the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, whose daughter (Faatimah Az-Zahraa') he married.

`Ali's mother was Faatimah Bint (daughter of) Asad, Ibn Hisham, Ibn Abde Manaaf, Ibn Qusayy. It was said that she was the first child born to the Hashimite family. She embraced Islam and migrated to Madeenah.

`Ali was one of the Companions that Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave the glad tidings of entering Paradise, and one of the six members of the consultative committee. He was one of the people who gained the pleasure of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, during his lifetime, and was the fourth Rightly-Guided Caliph of Muslims.

On the authority of Ibn Sa`d, may Allah be pleased with him, who says: "The best name `Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, loved was Abu Turaab. He was given this name because one day his wife Faatimah made him angry, so he left her, went to the mosque and lay down near a wall. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, went to him, and found his back covered with dust. He wiped his back and said, "Sit up, father of dust." (Reported by Al-Bukhari in *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad.*)

His Personal Appearance:

`Ali's complexion was very dark, with big beautiful eyes, a big stomach, bald, above average height, had a thick beard which was to his chest. The hair on his chest, and shoulders, was very thick.

His Embracing of Islam:

`Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was among the first people who embraced Islam. He did so at the age of seven. It is also said that he did so at the age of eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen or sixteen; Abdul Razaaq mentioned the last age sixteen, on the authority of Mahmar, Qatadah and Al-Hasan. It was also said that `Ali was the first person to embrace Islam; but the correct view is that he was only the first boy to do so. The same applied to Khadeejah who was the first woman to embrace Islam; Zayd Ibn Al-Harith was the first slave to become a Muslim, and Abu Bakr As-Siddeeq was the first freeman to believe in the message of Islam.

`Ali embraced Islam at this tender age because he was under the guardianship of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at a time when there was famine. The Prophet took him from his father (the Prophet's uncle), and when the Divine Message was revealed to him, his wife Khadeejah, and the rest of his household including his cousin, believed it.

It was narrated that `Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "I was the first person to embrace Islam", but the chain of narrators mentioned for this *Hadith* was not correct.

Ibn `Asaakir also reported a lot of *Hadiths* which are rejected and unsound; Allah is the All-Knowing.

Imam Ahmad reports on the authority of Shaybah and `Amr Ibn Murrah that Hamzah, a slave of the *Ansaar*, said: "I heard Zayd Ibn Araqm say, 'the first person to embrace Islam at the hands of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was `Ali," and in another version of the *Hadith*, the first person to offer *Salaah* was `Ali." `Amr said: "I mentioned these *Hadiths* to An-Nakh`yy, who rejected them and said that the first person to embrace Islam was Abu Bakr As-Sideeq, may Allah be pleased with him.

Muhammad Ibn Ka`b Al-Qurzai says: "The first woman to embrace Islam was Khadeejah, and the first two males to do so were Abu Bakr and `Ali. However, Abu Bakr made his faith manifest, whereas `Ali kept it a secret." The latter resorted to secrecy because of fear of his father, who later ordered him to follow his cousin (the Prophet) and support him.

`Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, migrated to Madeenah after the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, had left Makkah, because he had ordered `Ali to pay his debt, return the things that were left with him for safe-keeping, and join him later. `Ali complied, then went to Madeenah, and the Prophet established a pledge of brotherhood between him (`Ali) and Sahl. But Ibn Ishaaq and other writers on the Prophet's biography states that Prophet Muhammad established brotherhood between him and `Ali. A lot of *Hadiths* were narrated in this connection, but none of them are considered authentic because of their weak chain of narrators or poorness of style e.g., "You are my brother, inheritor, viceroy and the best to give order after me." This is a fabricated *Hadith* which is not in line with *Hadiths* reported in the authentic Books of

Al-Bukhari and Moslem and other; thus Allah is the All-Knowing.

Hadiths on His Virtues:

Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal said: "No companion of the Prophet's virtues have been mentioned more than those of `Ali, may Allah be pleased with him." This *Hadith* was reported by Al-Hakim.

Al-Bukhari and Moslem report on the authority of Sa`d Ibn Abi Waqqaas who narrates: "Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, asked `Ali to stay behind during the Battle of Tabook. He (`Ali) said: "Do you make me stay behind with women and children?" The Prophet said: *"Are you not content to stand to me as Aaron stood to Moosa (Moses), except that there is no Prophet after me."*

Al-Bukhari and Moslem report on the authority of Sahl Ibn Sa`d that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said on the day of the Battle Khaybar: *"I shall give the standard to a man tomorrow, through whose hands victory will be achieved, and Allah and His Prophet love him."* So people spent the night talking about who that person would be. In the morning all of those men went to Allah's Messenger with the hope of receiving the standard. The Prophet asked, "Where is `Ali Ibn Abi Taalib?" The Companions answered that he was suffering from a sickness in his eyes. He then said, "Send someone to call him." `Ali was brought, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, spat in his eyes and prayed for him. He recovered, and looked as if nothing was wrong with him; the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, then gave him the standard.

At-Tirmidhi reports on the authority of Abu Sareeha or Zayd Ibn Arqam that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: *"He who considers me his friend must also consider `Ali as his friend."* At-Tirmidhi and Al-Hakim report on the authority of Buraydah who narrate that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: *"Allah has ordered me to love four people, and informed me that He loves them."* "Name them, O Messenger," the Companions requested. He (the Prophet) said: *"`Ali is one of them (he said this three times), then Abu Dharr, Miqdaad and Salmaan."*

At-Tirmidhi reports on the authority of Ibn `Umar who says :"The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, instituted a pact of brotherhood among his Companions, and `Ali went to him in tears and said: "O Allah's Messenger! You have established brotherhood among your Companions, but you have not done so for me. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, replied: "*You are my brother in this world and in the Hereafter*."

Al-Hakim reports on the authority of `Aa'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, that `Ali was mentioned to her, and she said: "He is the best living authority on the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition)."

On the authority of Umm Salamahh, may Allah be pleased with her, who said: "When the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, became angry no one had the courage to talk to him, except `Ali." (Reported by At-Tabaraani and Al-Hakim and the *Hadith* was authenticated by the latter.)

On the authority of Ibn Mas`ood, may Allah be pleased with him, who narrates that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: *"To look at `Ali is an act of worship."*

(Reported by At-Tabaraani and Al-Hakim, and the chain of narrators of this *Hadith* is good.)

On the authority of Sa`d Ibn Abi Waqqaas that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, said: *"He who harms `Ali, harms me."* (Reported Abu Yahla and Al-Bazzaar.)

Umm Salamahh narrates: "I heard Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, say: *"`Ali does not part with Quraysh, nor does the Qur'an part with him; they will be together till they meet me at the Fountain (on the Day of Judgement)."* (Reported by At-Tabaraani with an authentic chain of narrators.)

On the authority of Umm Salamah who says she heard Allah's Messenger say: *"He who insults `Ali, insults me."* (Reported by Ahmad and Al-Hakim, and the *Hadith* was authenticated by the latter.)

On the authority of Abu Sa`eed Al-Khudryy that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, said to `Ali: "*You will fight in support of the Qur'an just like I fought to convey its message.*" (Reported by Ahmad and Al-Hakim with an authenticated chain of narrators.)

`Ali is reported to have said: "Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, called me one day and said: "*You have some of the attributes of `Eesa (Jesus); the Jews hated him to the extent that they accused his mother (of lewdness) falsely; and the Christians loved him to the extent that they raised him to a status (lordship) which he did not deserve. Two kinds of people will seek my destruction. He who feigns excessive love for me, and exceeds the limits in praising me, and he who slanders me, and is led by such hatred to accuse me falsely.*" (Reported by Al-Bazzaar, Abu Ya`la.)

`Ali's Exegesis of the Qur'an:

There are a lot of sayings narrated by `Ali on the exegesis of the Glorious Qur'an which are mentioned in detail in the book *At-Tafseer Al-Musnad Bi Asaaneedihi*.

Ibn Sa'ad reports that `Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "By Allah, no verse was revealed without my knowing the reason for its revelation, where it was revealed, and the person who was the caused of its revelation; indeed my Lord has granted me sound memory, mind, and honesty of speech."

On the authority of Ibn Sa`d and others who report that Abu At-Tufayl said that `Ali stated: "Ask me anything about Allah's Book, for I know everything about the verses therein: that is, those were revealed during the day and night, and the verses that were sent to the Prophet while he was on mountains.

On the authority of Muhammad Ibn Sireen narrates: "After the death of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, `Ali delayed pledging his allegiance to Abu Bakr, who asked him: "Are you against my leadership?" `Ali answered: "No, but I promised not to wear my wraparound except to go for *Salaah*, till I have a written all I know about the Qur'an." (Reported by Abu Dawood.)

Some of His Wise Sayings:

`Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, is reported to have said: "Stout-heartedness is akin to sound thought". He also said: "The close "relative" is the person who is brought closer to you in love, even though he may not be a real relative. And the distant "relative" is he who one distances himself from, though enmity, even though he may have a blood relation with him. No part the body is closed to the hands than the body itself; but if the hand is unsound, it is cut and revered."

`Ali is also reported to have said: "Take five pieces of advice from me: No one should fear anything except punishment for his sins; he should not hope for anything from anyone, except from his Lord. He who is ignorant should not feel ashamed of seeking knowledge, and he who does not know the answer to a question should not he ashamed of saying: "Allah knows best". Patience is part of faith, just as the head is part of the body; when patience vanishes, faith also vanishes, in the same may that the body cannot live without the head". These words are reported by Sa`eeid Ibn Mansoor in his *Sunan*.

The wise sayings of `Ali include: The best among men of Islamic knowledge is he who does not make people despair in attaining Allah's Mercy, does not give them the chance to sin against Allah, and does not make them feel safe from Allah's Punishment. The best Islamic scholar is also the person who does not abandon the Qur'an because of being attracted by another book. There is no good in worship which is devoid of knowledge, and knowledge without understanding is worthless. There is no value in reading without contemplating". These sayings of `Ali are reported by Ibn Al-Darees in his book *Fadaa'il Al-Qur'an*.

Ibn `Asaakir reports that `Ali said: "The best thing that gives me peace of mind when I am asked about something I do not know is for me to say: Allah's knowledge about everything is the best".

Ibn `Asaakir also reports that `Ali said: He who wants to be just towards people must like for them that he likes for himself.

`Ali is also quoted as saying: "These seven things are prompted by Satan: extreme anger, excessive yawing, excessive sneezing, vomiting, nose bleeding, secret conversation and sleeping while remembering Allah."

Some of `Ali's Wise Sayings, Sermons and Moral Values:

On the authority `Abdullaah Ibn Razeen who says: "I went to `Ali Ibn Abi Taalib on the feast of sacrifice day, and some other people and I said: 'May Allah bless you, we wish you could make us eat of this duck, for Allah has granted us much goodness'. He replied: 'O Ibn Razeen, I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, say: '*The Caliph is not permitted to have anything of Allah's Wealth (public property) except two bowls, one for him and his family to eat from, and another for his guests*.'" (Reported by Ahmad.)

In his book *At-Taqwa*, Ahmad reports on the authority of the freed-slave of Abu Ghaseen who says: "I saw `Ali go out and return with a man from Al-Karabees, and said to him: "Do you have a "*Sunbulan*" shirt? The man showed him a shirt, which he (`Ali) wore; it went down to his calf. He looked at the right and left sides of `Ali and said: I think this shirt fits nicely; it costs four Dirhams, Leader of the faithful. `Ali took the money from his wraparound, gave it to the man, and departed.

`Abdullaah Ibn Al-Mubarak reports on the authority of Wahab Al-Juhanyy who says: "`Ali came to us one day while he was wearing two garments (one of them an outer one). One side of his wraparound was loose while the other was held light with a piece of cloth. A Bedouin passed by and said to him: "Do you wear all these clothes, when you will die one day or be killed? `Ali replied: "O you Bedouin, I wear these clothes so that will make me distant myself from self-pride, be good for me in performing *Salaah*, and as a means of following the path of believers.

Abu Al-Qasim Al-Baghawi reports on the authority of the grandmother of Saalih the Draper who said: I saw `Ali buy dates costing one dirham and carry them in his outer-garment. A man said to him: "Commander of the faithful, why not make me carry them for you?" `Ali replied: "The father's children has a better right to carry them."

Ibn Hishaam reports on the authority of Zadhaan who says: "`Ali used to walk in the market place alone, while he was the Caliph. He used to direct people who lost their way, assist the weak reciting to them the Qur'anic verse,

تِلْكَ الدَّارُ اللآخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِينَ لا يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوًّا فِي الأَرْضِ وَلا فَسَادًا وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ (القصص:٨٣)

"That Home of the Hereafter we shall give to those who intend not high handedness or mischief on earth: and the End is (best) for the righteous." (Al-Qasas: 83) He would then comment: "This verse was revealed in connection with just and humble leaders, and those who generally have authority over people."

Saalih Ibn Abi Al-Aswad narrates that someone informed him that he saw `Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, riding a donkey while his feet were on one side of the animal, and said, (i.e. `Ali): "I am the one who has demeaned the world".

Yahya Ibn Mu`een narrates on the authority of Al-Hasan Ibn Saalih who says: "Those who practiced abstinence were mentioned to `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez, and some people said: "So and so practiced it much", while others suggested some other names. But `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez said: "The most abstemious person in the world is `Ali Ibn Abi Taalib.

Hisham Ibn Hasan narrates: "We were with Al-Hasan Al-Basri when a man from Al-Azaariqah came and asked: "Abu Sa`eed, what's your opinion about `Ali Ibn Abi Taalib? He (Hisham) said: "Al-Hasan Al-Basri's countenance changed, and said: "May Allah have mercy upon `Ali, he was "Allah's arrow" that did not miss its target (Allah's enemies), the most honorable scholar, the closet person to Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, and one of the most pious people of the *Ummah*. He used not to steal public money, nor was he neglectful of carrying out Allah's Commands. He gave all his attention to people. The Divine Book was like a beautiful garden to him in which he saw the secrets of the world and the Hereafter clarified.

To quote some of his wise words, Ibn Abi Dunya narrates on the authority of Abu Araakah who says: "I offered the *Fajr* prayer with `Ali, and he leaned on right side of his body as if he felt bored. When the sun rose and shone on the wall of the mosque, he performed a two-*Rak`ah* prayer.

Then he opened his hands in astonishment and said: "By Allah, I saw the Companions of the Prophet who cannot be compared with anyone today. They used to wake up in the morning disheveled, with dust on them, and sorrowful eyes as if they were in a funeral procession. They used to spend the night in performing *Salaah* and reciting the Qur'an; standing and prostrating in *Salaah* gave them solace at night, and when they woke up in the morning they remembered Allah much. They used to shiver out of fear of Almighty Allah like the unstable state of trees on a windy day, and they shed tears profusely till their clothes got wet. But now, people pass their nights in forgetfulness. After the aforementioned account given by `Ali, he was not seen laughing or joking till he was murdered by Allah's enemy Ibn Maljam."

Wakee` narrates on the authority of `Ali Ibn Abi Taalib who said: "Seek knowledge so that you will be regarded and recognized as scholars. There will come a time when the truth will be denied by nine tenths of people. None will gain salvation at that time except those who seek closeness to Almighty Allah. They will be the "leaders of guidance" and the "guiding lights" of knowledge.

The world is a passing one, and the Hereafter is approaching; both worlds have people who belong to them. I advise you to be "people of the Hereafter" not people of this passing world. Indeed, those who have turned their backs against this world regard it as a "mat", and the earth, bed coverings. They also regard water as a kind of perfume. He who longs for the Hereafter has less regard for his sensual pleasures, and he who fears the Hell-Fire refrains from doing what Allah forbids. A person whose goal is to enter Paradise hastens towards acts of worship, and he who abstains from worldly pleasure has less regard for tribulations. Indeed, there are some slaves of Allah who are in this world but appear to have seen the dwellers of Paradise living there forever, and the dwellers of Hell being punished therein. Such slaves of Allah make people feel safe when they are with them, their hearts are kind, they are chaste and their needs are few.

They have opted for being patient in suffering for a short time, so that they would get everlasting comfort. During the night they stand up in *Salaah*, tears flow on their cheeks and they seek the closeness of Almighty Allah. During the day they are seen as mild, righteous and pious people and one may look at them and say: "They are sick". But in actual fact they are not sick at all. They interact freely with people, but they had been engaged in a noble undertaking, i.e. worshipping Allah, Exalted be He.

Al-Asbagh Ibn Nabaatah narrates: `Ali ascended the pulpit one day, thanked Allah, praised Him and spoke about death saying: "O Allah's slaves, no one can escape death. It will come to you whether you wait or flee from it, so seek salvation and be on your guard. There's something lying in wait for you, i.e. the grave, so beware of its pressure, darkness and the loneliness found therein. Indeed, the grave may be a pit of Hell-Fire of or a garden of Paradise. The grave "calls out" three times everyday: 'I am a "house" of darkness, a house of worms and a wilderness.' There is also that awful day (the Day of Judgement) in which the young will become old men and grownups will be like drunkards (because of the horror of that day). Allah says:

وَتَضَعُ كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمْلٍ حَمْلَهَا وَتَرَى النَّاسَ سُكَارَى وَمَا هُم بِسُكَارَى وَلَكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللَّـــهِ
شَدِيد (الحج: ٢)

"Every mother giving suck shall forget her suckling babe, and every pregnant female shall drop her load (unformed): thou shalt see mankind as in a drunken riot, yet not drunk: but dreadful will be the wrath of Allah." (Al-Hajj: 2)

Apart from this there are other horrors which are more severe: A fire that is extremely hot, coming from a very deep pit, and people thrown therein will be chained. The water found in Hell will be of pus, and the angels who guard it (Hell) would receive command from Allah not to show mercy. `Ali then cried, and the Muslims who were with him did the same. He then went on to say: "But on the other hand there is Paradise whose area is like that of the heavens and earth which will be the abode of the righteous. May Allah make you and I pious, and save us from that painful punishment."

Wakee` reports that `Awfa Ibn Dalham said: `Ali gave a Khutbah, and said: "This worldly life is about to end and the Hereafter is fast approaching. The "arena" is in this world, and the winner of the "competition" will be determined in the Hereafter. You are living "days of hope", which will be followed by an inevitable end of life. He who neglects doing good deeds during those days, and before the end of his life, will be disappointed. As you know, desires are attained by working against anything that stands in the way of achieving them. Indeed, those who hope to enter Paradise ought not to sleep a lot, and whosoever wants to be saved from the Hell-Fire should not sleep a lot. He who is not benefited by the truth will be affected by falsehood. And whoever is not guided to the right path, will follow the path of misguidance. You have been ordered to "depart" (for the Hereafter) and given provision for that "journey"; and take note that this world is a passing one in which the righteous and the shameless sinners get their daily bread. But in the Hereafter, the true promise of the All-Powerful Lord will be fulfilled. Indeed:

الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُم بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَاللَّهُ يَعِدُكُم مَّغْفِرَةً مِّنْهُ وَفَضْلاً وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ
{٢٦٨}(البقرة:٢٦٨)

"The devil promiseth you destitution and enjoineth on you lewdness. But Allah promiseth you forgiveness from Himself with bounty. Allah is All Embracing, All Knowing." (Al-Baqarah: 168)

O you people, make good use of your days on earth, and you will be saved in the Hereafter. Thus, Allah has promised to grant Paradise to whoever worships Him, and will make Hell the abode of whoever disobeys Him. The flames of the Hell-Fire will not be put out; the person trapped therein will neither be released nor granted respite. The fire of Hell will be extremely hot, it will come from a very deep pit and its dwellers will have pus as a drink.

My greatest fear for you is following your base desires and vain hope of long life. (In another version of this narration, following of one's base desires is a bar to truthfulness, and vain hope of long life makes one forget about the Hereafter.)

`Aasim Ibn Dhamrah reports that a man expressed hatred of this world to `Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, who replied: "The world is a "place of honesty" for those who are honest with it; it is a place of gaining salvation for those who know about it (the world), and a place of gaining wealth and provision for the Hereafter for those who seek them herein. The world is also the place wherein Allah sent Divine Revelation, the praying-place of Allah's Angels, the earth in which His Prophets' places of worship are found, and the "market place" of those closest to Allah. In this "market place". In this "market place" (the world), such people gain Allah's Mercy and strive to enter Paradise. He who denounces the world ought to know that it has warned of its dangers, it is coming to an end, the evil that is behind the happiness felt in it, and the misfortune of those who desire it. The world has also warned those who are attached to it". `Ali added: "O you who has denounced the world because your desires have not been fulfilled, when did it (the world) deceive you? When was it "harsh" with you? Was it because of the death of your father or your mother being buried in her grave?"

Ibn Abi Ad-Dunya reports on the authority of Yahya Ibn Ya`mur who narrated that `Ali said: "Everything is predestined from the Heavens like drops of rain which fall from the sky. Every soul will get that which Allah predestines for it – this may be in the form an increase or decrease in one's well being, the number of his children, or amount of his wealth. If one finds a decrease in the aforementioned, he should not consider this a misfortune. The Muslim who does not indulge in worldly pleasures turns out to be humble, and evil people are those who are tempted by the "seducing beauty" of this world. A man who is miserable and has lost hope of getting fire is eager to see sparks flare up from fire iron, so that he would stop worrying.

Thus, a Muslim who does not resort to deception, hopes to be rewarded in this world or the Hereafter when he supplicates Allah Almighty. He may be rewarded in this world by being blessed with children, wealth, honor and being religious. Or, Allah Almighty may reward him in the Hereafter, which is far more better and everlasting. There are two kinds of benefits: worldly benefit, which takes the form of piety and wealth, and the benefit of the Hereafter which comprises of those good things that are everlasting. Allah, through His Grace, may make one enjoy the benefits of both worlds. Sufyaan Ath-Thawri commented that such wise sayings could only have been uttered by `Ali.

Zubayd Al-Yami reports on the authority of Muhajir Al-`Aamiri, who narrates that `Ali Ibn Abi Taalib wrote some words of advice to a companion of his, who was the governor of a certain city: "Don't isolate yourself from your subjects for a long period of time, if you do so, this will cause you worry and make you ignorant of their affairs. Isolation will cause the subjects not to know anything about their ruler, so, old people will be suppressed, and young people will be honored and held in high esteem. Also, when a ruler does not know much about his subjects, what is good in the society will be considered evil, and vice versa; and truth will be tainted with falsehood.

It must also be remembered that the ruler is an ordinary human being who dose not know those issues which people keep secret; for there is no art of telling a man's construction from his face. It is, therefore, difficult for him to distinguish between a liar and someone who is honest; thus, the ruler can be able to give people their rights by being in close contact with them.

\`Ali went on to say to his companion that one could only be either of two people: one who exerts effort in giving people their rights, and therefore dose not need to isolate himself from such people. It is, therefore, incumbent upon him to give them their due rights. The other kind of person is he who miserly. How fast is it for such a person to lose his bounties! And how fast will people stop from requesting something from who is a miser.

H̲ammaad Ibn Salam reports that Ayyoob As-Sak̲h̲tiaani said: "He who loves Abu Bakr makes religion (Islam) firmly established; he who loves \`Umar treads the path to righteousness; he who loves \`Uthman is guided by Allah's Light. And he who loves \`Ali "grasps a firm handhold". Finally, he who says good things about the Companions of Prophet Muh̲ammad, peace and blessings be upon him, makes himself devoid of hypocrisy.

Abu Dawood reports in the Book of Predestination that during the days of the Kharijities (those who revolted against `Ali), ten of `Ali's Companions used to guard him every night with their arms. `Ali saw them and asked, "What has kept you waiting?" they answered, "We have come to guard you". `Ali said, "Will you guard me from what has been predestined?" He then went on to say: "Nothing happens on earth except that which Allah has predestined, for I hope the Almighty will protect me in Heaven."

Some Merits of the Commander of Faithful:

Al-Hasan Ibn `Arafah reports on the authority of Muhammad Ibn `Ali who said: "A call was heard from the heavens on the day of the battle of Badr: there is no sword but Dhul Faqaar, and no young man, except `Ali.

`Ali Ibn Abi Taalib witnessed the Ridawaan Pledge of Allegiance, about which Allah Almighty says:

لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَنزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَثَابَهُمْ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا {١٨}(الفتح:١٨)

"Allah was well pleased with the believers when they swore allegiance unto thee beneath the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down peace of reassurance on them, and hath rewarded them with a near victory." (Al-Fath: 18)

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, also commented on this pledge saying: "*Those who took the pledge of allegiance under the tree will never enter the Hell-Fire.*"

It is also reported in the authentic books of *Hadith* and others, that on the day of the Khaybar battle, the Prophet said: "*Tomorrow I shall give the standard to a man who loves Allah and His Prophet, and is also loved by Allah and His Prophet; he does not flee from the battlefield. Allah will make Muslim gain victory through him.*" So, the Prophet's Companions passed the night wondering who the standard would be given to. `Umar even went to the extent of saying: " It was only on this occasion that I longed for leadership". On the following day, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, gave the standard to `Ali Ibn Abi Taalib, and the Muslims gained victory under his command.

Muhammad Ibn Ishaaq reports that Salamah Ibn `Amr Ibn Al-Akwa` said: Allah's Messenger sent some men under the command of Abu Bakr As-Siddeeq to the Jewish forts in Khaybar; they fought, but returned without gaining victory. Then he (the Prophet) sent another group of men under the command of `Umar Ibn Al-Khattab. They also fought, but did not gain victory. After that, Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "*Tomorrow, I shall give the flag to a man who loves Allah and His Prophet, and is also loved by Allah and His Prophet; Allah will make victory be gained through him. He is not one that flees from the battlefield.*" Salamah further narrates that Allah's Messenger sent for `Ali, who was suffering from his eyes, and spat slightly in them (his eyes). The Prophet then said to him: "*Take this flag and proceed with it, till Allah makes you gain victory.*" `Ali went away in a hurry, and Salamah said that he followed him till he his flag under one of the forts. A Jew saw `Ali from the top of a fort, and asked: "Who are you?" `Ali answered: "I am `Ali Ibn `Ali Taalib. The Jew said: "I swear by the One who revealed the Torah to Moses, you will gain victory." `Ali did not return till Allah granted him victory. This *Hadith* was also reported by `Ikrimah Ibn `Ammaar and other reporters of *Hadith*.

It is reported in the two *Saheehs* Al-Bukhari and Moslem, on the authority of Sa`d Ibn Abi Waqqaas who said that Allah's Messenger said to `Ali: *"Are you not content to stand to me as Haroon (Aaron) stood to Moosa (Moses), except that there is no Prophet after me."*

Ahmad and At-Tirmidhi also report on the authority of Sa`d Ibn Abi Waqqaas, father, who said that Mu`awiyah Ibn Abi Sufyaan asked Sa`d: "What prevents you from insulting Abu Turaab, i.e. `Ali Ibn Abi Taalib?" He replied: "Three things the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said about him prevent me from doing so. If he had said one of them about me, it would have been more preferable to me to red (expensive) cattle. I heard the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, say to `Ali, after he had decided to make him be in charge of Al-Madeenah in the absence of the Prophet and his Companions, who were leaving for *Jihad*: "*Don't you like to be with me in the same position in which Aaron was, with Moses? The only difference between them and us, is that there will be no other Prophet after me.*" The Prophet said this because `Ali was sad because be thought it degrading to be left behind with women and children white the other Muslim men were going to fight in Allah's cause (*Jihad*).

Sa`d said that the second thing the Prophet said about Allah which he wished for himself was when he, peace and blessings be upon him, said on the day of the battle of Khaybar: *"I shall give the standard to a man who loves Allah and His Prophet, and is loved by Allah and His Prophet.*" All the Companions looked forward to being given the standard. But the Prophet said, *"Please call me `Ali."* And when he was brought suffering from his eyes, the Prophet spat slightly in his eyes and then gave him the standard, and he gained victory.

A Brief Sketch of `Ali's Private Life, Islamic Legal Rulings and Words:

In his *Sunan*, Sa`eed Ibn Mansoor says: An old man from Fazaarah narrated that he heard `Ali say: "All praise and thanks are due to Allah Who has made my enemy ask me about matters relating to his religion. Mu`awiyah wrote to ask me about the legal ruling (in inheritance) of the bisexual, and I wrote back to him that he should inherit according to the private part that is more prominent - mal or female".

Ibn `Asaakir reports on the authority Hasan: When `Ali arrived in Al-Basrah (in Iraq), Ibn Al-Kawwaa' and Qays Ibn `Abaad went to him and said: "Tell us about this situation you have found yourself in; are you going to govern a nation wherein people attack each other? "Didn't the Prophet, pace and blessings be upon him, promise you anything? Please inform us, as you are honest and trustworthy about what you heard from him." He (`Ali) said: "Concerning being promised something by the Prophet, pace and blessings be upon him, he did not do that; by Allah, I was the first person to believe his Message, and would not be the first to lie against him. If he had promised me that (i.e. the Caliphate), I would not have allowed the two brothers from the family of Taym Ibn Murrah, and `Umar Ibn Al-Khattab to stand on his (the Prophet's) pulpit; I would have fought them single handed, even if I had no helmet but this garment of mine". But the Prophet, pace and blessings be upon him, was not murdered, nor did he die suddenly. He was sick for a number of days, and the *Mu'zzin* (prayer caller) used to go to him, them call people to *S̲alaah*. The Prophet used to ask Abu Bakr to lead people in *S̲alaah*, while he knew my status. One of his wives wanted him to choose someone else, instead of Abu Bakr, but he refused, became angry and said: "You are even like the women that were with Joseph. Tell Abu Bakr to lead the people in *S̲alaah*."

`Ali is also reported to have said that after the death of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, the Companions consulted among themselves and chose their leader in this world, whom the Prophet (pace be upon Him) was pleased to be their religious leader.

And as Muslims know, *S̲alaah* is the foundation of religion, the most important religious duty and a pillar of Islam. `Ali said that they therefore pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr, who deserved it. The Companions did not disagree concerning his caliphate; they did not accuse each other, nor did they show disloyalty to him.

`Ali said that he was loyal to Abu Bakr, obeyed him, and joined his army in *Jihad*. He used to accept what Abu Bakr gave him, accepted his order to take part in *Jihad*, and punished those who went against Allah's laws, at his command.

After the death of Abu Bakr, he was succeeded by `Umar, who followed the example of his predecessor. All the Companions pledged allegiance to `Umar and were not disloyal to him. `Ali said that he was loyal to `Umar, fought in the army in which he was commander, took what `Umar gave him, and went out to *Jihad* when he ordered it. He went on to say that he also used to mete out the punishments stipulated by Allah, on the orders of `Umar.

After the death of `Umar, `Ali reflected on his blood relationship with the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, his being among the first people to embrace Islam and his other virtues. He (`Ali) thought that he would not be done justice in the matter of the caliphate; but `Umar felt that his successor might commit sins for which he (`Umar) might be held responsible, if he appointed him. So, `Umar did not appoint a successor, nor did he mention the name of his son in this issue. If he wished, he would have been partial and chose his son. He delegated the responsibility of choosing a successor to six people from the Quraysh tribe, and `Ali was one of them.

When these people were assembled, `Ali thought that none of them would be against his appointment. `Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn `Awf made them promise that they would be loyal to and obey whoever Allah chose to be their leader. Then he (`Abdur-Rahmaan) took `Uthmaan Ibn `Affaan's hand and put it in `Ali's; and the latter thought that he had given his pledge of allegiance in advance, and that he had promised to be loyal to someone else. Thus, all the Companions pledged their allegiance to `Uthmaan. `Ali said that he was loyal and obedient to him (`Uthmaan), took part in *Jihad* in the Muslim army that was under his (`Uthmaan) command. He used to accept whatever `Uthmaan gave him, and punished those who went against Allah's laws, on his (`Uthmaan's) orders.

When `Uthman was murdered, `Ali once against thought about his stance towards the caliphate. He recalled that the two Caliphs whom the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, chose to lead the Companions in *Salaah* had died, and the last caliph had just been murdered. So, the people living in the cities of the two holy shrines (Makkah and Madeenah) and the territories close them, pledged their allegiance to `Ali.

But his right to the caliphate was usurped by someone else whose relationship with the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was not as close as his. This usurper was not as learned as `Ali, nor did he embrace Islam before him. Thus he (`Ali) had a better right to be Commander of the Faithful.

Abu Nu`aym reports in his *Dalaa'il*, on the authority of Ja`far's father that two men went to `Ali to be judged for a dispute between them, while he was sitting on a wall, a man said to `Ali: "The wall will collapse." He replied: "Go about your business, Allah suffices as a protector." `Ali judged between the two men, and the wall collapsed immediately after he had descended it.

In *At-Tuyuriyyaat*, Ja`far Ibn Muhammad reports on the authority of his father that a man said to `Ali: " We hear you say in your Khutbah: "O Allah! Grant us righteousness through the means you granted it to the Rightly-Guided caliphs; who are these caliphs?" `Ali's eyes become wet with tears, and he said: "They are my beloved ones, Abu Bakr and `Umar, the exemplars of guidance, the Sheikhs of Islam, the two notables of tribe of Quraysh who deserved to be followed after the death of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. He who follows them is safeguarded, and anyone who treads their path is guided to the path of righteousness. A person who "clings" to them becomes a member of Allah's "party".

`Abdu-Razzaaq reports on the authority of Hajar Al-Mudaryy thus: "`Ali asked me: 'What would you do if you were ordered to curse me?' Hajar also asked: "Would such a situation arise?" `Ali answered, "Yes, it would come to pass." Hajar asked, "Then, what should I do?" `Ali said, "Curse me, but do not be suspicious of me." Hajar said that Muhammad Ibn Yoosuf, brother of Al-Hajjaaj, who was the governor of Yemen, ordered him to curse `Ali. He (Al-Hajjaaj) said: "The governor has ordered me to curse `Ali, so curse him; may

Allah's curse be upon him. No one knew the wisdom behind these words except one man.

At-Tabaraani in his book *Al-Awsat*, and Abu Nu`aym in his *Ad-Dalaa'il*, report on the authority of Zaadaan, who said that `Ali narrated a *Hadith*, and was accused of lying by a man. `Ali said to him: "Do you agree that I pray against you, if you are the liar?" the man said: "Go ahead." So, `Ali prayed, and the man lost his eyesight.

Ibn Abi Shaybah reports in his book *Al-Musanif* on the authority of `Ataa', who said: "`Ali came with a man against whom two people bore witness that he had stolen. After `Ali had dealt with the issues of other people, he issued a threat against the false witness saying: "If any false witness is brought to me, I will deal with him in such and such a way". After that, he asked to be seen; so, he set the accused free.

Ibn `Asaakir reports on the authority of Ja`far Ibn Muhammad and his father that the words "the All-Powerful is Allah", were inscribed on `Ali's ring.

Al-Madaa'ini reports: When `Ali went to Al-Kufah, one of the Arab sages met him and said: "By Allah, you have graced the caliphate without it's gracing you, Commander of the Faithful; you have made it an exalted position, without it's exalting you; and the caliphate was needier of you than the need you had of it".

Majma` reports that `Ali used to weep the Islamic treasury and pray in it, hoping that place would bear witness in the Hereafter that he did not deny Muslims their right to public money.

Ibn `Asaakir also reports that `Ali said: "You must be more concerned about Allah's acceptance of your deeds, than the deeds themselves, for no deed is considered meager if it is accompanied with piety". So, a deed that gains Divine acceptance is never considered minor.

Yahya Ibn Ja`dah reports that `Ali Ibn Abi Taalib said: "O you who have memorized the Qur'an, practice its teaching, for the learned man is he who learns and translate into practice what he learns. There will come a time when people will possess vast knowledge but their secret actions will be different from what they do in public. They will sit in groups, feeling proud of themselves, to the extent that a man will be angry if his student seek knowledge from someone else. The deeds of such men of knowledge will not be accepted by Allah".

It was also reported that `Ali said: "Divine acceptance of one's deeds is the best means of guidance; good manners are the best Companion; a sound mind is one's best friend; learning is the best inheritance, and no solitude is worse than that caused by conceit.

Al-Harith relates: A man went to `Ali and said: "Inform me about predestination". He answered: "It (predestination) is a dark path which you should not tread". The man asked again: "Inform me about predestination". `Ali answered: "It is a " deep sea" into which you should not enter". The man asked a third time: "Inform me about predestination". `Ali once again answered: " It is a Divine secret that you should not try to find out about. The questioner repeated his question a fourth time, so `Ali asked him: "O you questioner, has Allah created you by His will, or by your will? The man answered: "By His (the Almighty's) will. `Ali said: "He (Allah) will therefore make you do whatever He wills".

`Ali was once asked: "What is generosity?" he answered: "That which is self-motivated; but generosity which is due to making a request or begging, is an act resorted to because one feels shy, or wants to honor the beggar or the one who requests.

It was also reported that a man went to `Ali and praised and extolled him; however, `Ali had been informed beforehand about him. So, he said to the man: "I am not as you have described me, and above your opinion about me in your mind".

`Ali is reported to have said: The recompense of sin is carelessness with acts of worship, straightened means of sustenance, and decrease in pleasure. He was asked: "What do you mean by, "decrease in pleasure"? He answered: "It means that whenever one has a strong desire to do or get what is lawful, he is overtaken by doing or getting something that is unlawful."

`Uqbah Ibn Abi As-Sahbaa' narrates: When Ibn Maljam dealt `Ali a fatal blow, his son, Al-Hasan, went to him crying. His father said: "Take these four pieces of advice of mine and four others, into good part. Al-Hasan asked: "What are they, father?" `Ali answered: "The best wealth is one's intellect, the worst kind of poverty is foolishness; no solitude is worse than that caused by conceit, and the best form of "kindness" is good manners. The other four pieces of advice are. Because of the Companionship of the foolish, for they will do you harm while they intend good. Beware of befriending a liar, because he will make you believe what is not true and take your mind away from the truth. Beware of the friendship of the miser, because he will withhold from you what you stand in need of. Beware of a shameless person, as he will forsake you because of any meager gain".

Ibn `Asaakir reports that a Jew came to `Ali and asked him: "When did your Lord first exist?" `Ali's countenance changed, and he answered: "He (Allah) existed when there was no beginning; His Being was not preceded by anything else; His Existence is without a cause, and is neither with a beginning nor an ending. He does not rely on any means that will lead to an end because He (the Almighty) is the besought of all". The Jew then embraced Islam.

The *Hadiths* Narrated in Connection with the Kharijites:

Imam Ahmad reports on the authority of Suwayd Ibn Ghaflah who narrates that `Ali said: "If I speak to you about the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, you should believe me, because I prefer falling down from the sky to lying about him. But if I talk to you on issues of mutual interest, you must know that war calls for deception. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, says: "In later years, some people who are part of my nation will emerge. They will be young men, foolhardy, quote the words of the best human being, and they will read the Qur'an without contemplating its meaning." One of the narrators of this *Hadith*, `Abdur-Rahmaan narrates another version of it: "Their faith will be in their mouths only, not in their hearts. They will bold out of the fold of Islam with the speed of an arrow that goes out of a bow. If you come across them, kill them; for there will be great reward on Judgement Day for those who kill them. This *Hadith* is reported in the two *Saheehs* of Al-Bukhari and Moslem.

Ahmad reports on the authority of `Ubaydah who narrates that `Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, said to the people of Nahrawaan: "There is a man with a short hand among you. If it were not for fear that you would be proud, I would inform you about what Allah revealed to His Prophet concerning the reward He would grant anyone who would kill that man and those with him. `Ubaydah went on to say, "I asked `Ali, 'Did you hear these words from the Prophet?' `Ali answered: "By the Lord of the Ka`bah (three times), that I heard them from him." This *H̲adith* is reported by Moslem. After narrating it, `Ali added: "I prefer falling down from the sky to the ground, to lying about the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him.

Imam Ah̲mad reports on the authority of Abu Katheer the feed-slave of *Al-Ans̲aar* who said: "I was with my master, `Ali Ibn Abi T̲aalib when some people of Nahrawan were killed; some people's hearts were heavy about this incident. `Ali addressed them saying: "O you people! Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, spoke to me about some people who will abandon Islam with the speed of an arrow from a bow, and will never return to its fold once again. The sign of that incident is that there would be a black man among them with a short hand. And one of his hands is like a woman's breast, with a nipple like that of such a breast and on it are seven strands of hair; search him". So, `Ali's Companions searched for this man and found him by the bank of a river, lying among the dead. When `Ali saw him, he glorified Allah saying: "Allahu Akbar (Allah is the Greatest), Allah is the Most Truthful, and so is His Prophet". The dead man was having a bow on his person; `Ali took it and struck his short hand saying: " Allah is Most Truthful, and so is His Prophet". All the people glorified Allah saying, "Allahu Akbar", when they saw the dead man. They were delighted, and the grief they felt for the people killed in Nahrawaan, vanished. (This *H̲adith* was only reported by Ah̲mad.)

Imam Ah̲mad reports on the authority of Abu Sa`eed who narrates that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "*There will be among the people of my nation* *disunity and differences. And there will be those whose nice words would be incompatible with their deeds. They will read the Qur'an, whose effect will be in their mouths only, not in their hearts. They will demean each other's Salaah and Siyaam; these people will hasten to abandon Islamic teachings with the speed of an arrow from a bow, and will not return to the fold of Islam once again. They will be the worst of Allah's creatures. Give glad tidings to those who will kill them, or be killed by them. These revolters would call people to follow the teachings of Allah's Book (the Qur'an), while they themselves will deviate from them. He who fights against them has a better claim to obeying Allah, than them.*" The Companions asked, "O Allah's Messenger! How would we recognize them?" The Prophet answered, "*Their heads will be shaved*". (Reported by Abu Dawood and other reporters of *Hadith*.)

On the authority of Jabir Ibn `Abdellaah who narrates thus: "Once I was with the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, in the year of Al-Ju`raanah, while he was distributing silver, that was in Bilaal's clothes, then a man said, "O Allah's Messenger! Be just (in your distribution)". The Prophet replies: "*Woe unto you!" Who else will be just, if I am not just, I will be done for if I am unjust.*" `Umar was raged, and said: "O Allah's Messenger, allow me to kill this hypocrite". But the Prophet replied: "*Allah forbid; people will say that I kill my Companions. This man and his associates will read the Qur'an without having faith in it, and they will abandon Islam with the speed of an arrow from a bow*". (Reported by Ahmad)

Moslem Ibn Al-Hajjaaj reports in his *Saheeh* on the authority of the Zayd Ibn Wahab Al-Juhani, who says that he was in the army of those who later joined the Kharijites. `Ali addressed the people saying: "O you people! I heard the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, say: "*Certain people from my nation will read the Qur'an in a way different from* *yours, the way you pray will be different from theirs, and they will fast in a manner completely different from yours. They will read the Qur'an thinking that Allah will reward them for doing so, not knowing that it (the Qur'an) will serve as a "proof" against them. If the army that will fight against them know their Divine reward revealed to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, they will exert utmost effort. The aforementioned people will be known by the presence among them of a man without a forearm. The end of his upper arm looks like the nipple of a breast, with white stands of hair. These hypocrites will then go to Mu`awiyah and the people of the Levant, who will leave them to control your children and wealth; I believe these are the people who will do such things. They shed the blood that is sacred and denied people their freedom of movement. So, go forth and fight them in the name of Allah*". Salamah said that Zayd Ibn Wahab suggested one station (for the army) after another, till they passed by an aqueduct. We met on that day in which the leader of the Kharijites was `Abdullaah Ibn Wahab Ar-Raasibi, who said to his men: "Throw your spears (at the enemies), take out your sword and break their sheaths, for I fear that they (your enemies) will make an appeal to you like the one they made on Harooraa' Day". So, his men took up their positions and fought brutally with their spears and arrows. `Ali's army also charged with their spears and arrows.

Some of the hypocrites, or rather the revolters, killed one another. And only two of `Ali's men were killed on that day. He (`Ali) said: "Search for the short armed man". His men could not find him, so `Ali himself conducted the search, till he found dead bodies piled up, i.e. one above the other. `Ali said, "They have hidden him." His men then found the short-armed man very close to the ground, with those who joined the Kharijites. `Ali then glorified Allah saying: "Allahu Akbar (Allah is the Greatest)," and said: "Allah is Most

Truthful, and His Messenger conveyed the Almighty's Message. `Ubaydah As-Salmaani then went up to him (`Ali) and said: "O Commander of the Faithful! By Allah Who has no partner, I heard what you have said, from Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, `Ali made him swear three times to confirm what he (`Ubaydah As-Salmaani) had said. The version of the *Hadith* quoted herein is that of Muslim. This *Hadith* was also reported by Abu Dawood.

`Ali, May Allah Be Pleased With Him, Takes Over:

As soon as `Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was made caliph, he delivered a keynote address which conditions then desperately called for. `Ali started off by reminding Muslims of the Glorious Qur'an which Allah revealed to guide man to the right path. He next called on them to do good and forsake evil. He also told them to fulfill Allah's Obligations and to preserve His sanctities, on top of which is the sanctity of a Muslim's life. `Ali hence publicly declared his views regarding any act of aggression against a Muslim, be he a caliph or otherwise. In his address, he also highlighted points of strength in the Muslim nation and urged them to strive for the Sake of Almighty Allah, fear Him and abide by His Commands so as to win His handsome reward.

Revenge:

`Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, immediately fell to undertaking the responsibilities of his new post. At that point, he had to take care of two very urgent, not to mention thorny, issues. The first was punishing the assassins of his predecessor, `Uthmaan Ibn `Affaan, may Allah be pleased with him, who were still freemen on the loose, and who were also confident that the new caliph would never even think of taking action against them, since they were the single major military power on the scene. However, almost every single person who did not take part in the revolt against `Uthmaan demanded that the new caliph immediately adopt a firm stand against the sinful insurgents.

Talhah and Az-Zubayr, may Allah be pleased with both of them, along with other Companions of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, walked in on `Ali and said: "We demand that vengeance be taken on the assassins. Those men took the liberty of shedding that man's blood." "Fellow brothers," `Ali answered, "I am well-aware of that. But how do I handle people who have control over us, whereas we have none over them? You saw how your servants revolted with them and your Bedouins declared loyalty to them. They can do with us whatever they please. Do you think we are in a position to do that which you ask for?" "No," they returned. `Ali then rejoined, "I swear by Allah, I will not do but that which you agree to. Let us wait till people calm down, the fury in their hearts abates, and each retrieves his right. So leave me now, and see which way things will go then come back to me."

It, therefore, becomes clear that `Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was of the view that they should wait till he managed to have a firmer grip on matters, and be in full control of the situation. `Ali realized his power had to surpass that of the insurgents in order for vengeance to be taken properly. The elite of the Muslims had no choice but to agree and wait impatiently.

Dismissing the Governors:

The second issue `Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was up against had to do with the governors of the provinces who were mostly a sources of constant complaints from people during the rule of `Uthmaan, may Allah be pleased with him. `Ali had to make up his mind whether to dismiss them or keep them in their posts for a while till he managed to hold sway all through.

In `Ali's opinion, the governors whom `Uthmaan had appointed were primarily responsible for all the events that ensued. He had even advised `Uthmaan to be firmer with them till things were back under control. He anticipated that the situation might be aggravated and matters could take a turn for the worse. Therefore, no sooner had people pledged allegiance to `Ali than he replaced all of `Uthmaan's governors at once. Instead, he appointed `Abdullaah Ibn `Abbaas as the governor of Yemen; `Uthmaan Ibn Haneef as the governor of Basrah; `Imarah Ibn Shihaab of Kufa, and Qays as the governor of Egypt. Sahl Ibn Haneef was asked to take charge of governorship of Syria from Mu`awiyah.

Almost all historians unanimously agree that it was not wise on the part of `Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, to take such action. A group from among the wisest of Muslims, including Mugheerah Ibn Shu`bah and Ibn `Abbaas, advised `Ali not to take such a hasty action. According to them, he should not dismiss them unless they pledged loyalty to `Ali, because Uthmaan's assassination could be an easy excuse for them to refuse the pledge of loyalty to `Ali altogether. They particularly warned him against deposing Mu`awiyah Ibn Abi Sufyaan, who was then a major power to be reckoned with. It is noteworthy that Mu`awiyah, and behind him the entire people of Syria, unwaveringly refused to accept what happened to `Uthmaan and all the events that followed. It is obvious, therefore, that the whole situation needed to be handled with much more subtlety and flexibility than was displayed by `Ali.

Despite being a shrewd politician, `Ali's adamant adherence to what is right won the better of him. He was a man of unshaken principles who would never turn a blind eye to whomever he was displeased with. He believed that pretending to be on good terms with them was a screaming violation of honesty and straightforwardness. He, therefore, did not hesitate for a minute to depose them all.

The Situation between `Ali and Mu`awiyah Flares up:

`Ali sent a messenger to Mu`awiyah asking him to pledge allegiance. Mu`awiyah, however, turned back the messenger with no answer. Later, during the month of S̲afar – i.e. two months after the assassination of `Uthmaan – Mu`awiyah sent a message to `Ali in which he wrote "From Mu`awiyah to `Ali". This is a phrase that meant that Mu`awiyah did not recognize `Ali as a caliph, nor did he pledge allegiance to him. `Ali asked the messenger about the truth of the matter. The messenger replied: "*I left behind me people who would settle for nothing less than punishment.*" The messenger also told `Ali that fifty thousand sheikhs of Syria were bemoaning the death of `Uthmaan and were determined to fight until the assassins were handed over to them. `Ali replied, "O Allah! You know it well that I am free from any charge of `Uthmaan's assassination. I swear by Allah that the assassins have escaped. "

In his book, *Al-Milal wan Nih̲al*, Ibn H̲azm points that Mu`awiyah never doubted `Ali's virtue or the fact that he did merit the caliphate. However, he was of the view that chastisement of the assassins should have taken precedence over the pledge of allegiance. He also saw that he had more right than anyone else to demand that vengeance be taken on them. Therefore, Mu`awiyah held punishing the perpetrators as a prerequisite to pledging allegiance to `Ali, although he was well aware of the fact that the caliph would not be able to do so at that point. The reason was because the perpetrators belonged to the tribes that basically constituted the majority of `Ali's followers and soldiers. Mu`awiyah is even reported to have sent `Ali a message in which he outspokenly accused him of granting refuge to `Uthmaan's assassins, being his escort, supporters and followers. It, therefore, becomes evident that Mu`awiyah's obstinate demand can only mean one thing: that Mu`awiyah insisted on rejecting the pledge of allegiance that all Muslims, with the exception of Mu`awiyah and people of Syria, paid `Ali.

It is only natural that the caliph would realize the necessity of having people of Syria join Muslims in pledging allegiance, even if that would require fighting them for it. After much mulling over and deliberation, that was precisely what `Ali, backed by most of his men, decided to do. He therefore prepared to head for Syria so as to fight those rebels and to preserve the unity of the nation. However, unexpected tidings from Makkah forced him to change his plans and postpone the march to Syria.

The Battle of Al-Jamal (the Camel):

The Mother of the Faithful, `Aa'ishahh, may Allah be pleased with her, was on her way from Makkah to Medinah when she received the sad news of the assassination of `Uthman. She was also offended to learn that people of Medinah unanimously pledged allegiance to `Ali as Muslims' new caliph. `Aa'ishahh therefore decided not to return to Medinah thus declaring her extreme outrage and condemnation of the sad events that took place. Instead, she headed back to Makkah repeating: "I swear by Allah that `Uthmaan was unjustly killed. I swear by Allah that I will demand that he be avenged!" Despite the fact that it was repeatedly narrated that the Mother of the Faithful, may Allah be pleased with her, was against `Uthman's policies during his final years, the sad end that he came to stirred feelings of grief and sorrow in every Muslim's heart. Besides, `Aa'ishahh, more than anyone else, knew full well `Uthman's lofty status among the Companions and was aware that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, held him dear.

The reason why `Aa'ishahh was against `Ali's caliphate and her insistence on taking vengeance on the assassins of `Uthmaan was because she may have thought that people of Medinah, including `Ali, were being lax in defending the victimized caliph and protecting him from harm. Moreover, T̲alh̲ah and Az-Zubayr had asked `Ali's permission to head for Makkah to perform the minor pilgrimage. No sooner had they arrived there than they joined the Mother of the Faithful in her call and declared that they were coerced into paying allegiance to the new caliph. They also announced that they were no longer under any obligation toward him now that they were away from him. The Ummayads too left Medinah upon `Uthman's assassination and made for Makkah. Marawan Ibn Al-H̲akam stood out and lead all those who demanded that the assassins of the martyred caliph be punished wherever they may be.

The Mother of the Faithful suggested that people go out to to Medinah. However, T̲alh̲ah and Az-Zubayr convinced her that Basrah would be a better place for their call, as people of Medinah were all the supporters on the new caliph. This being the case, people set out to Basrah raising the banners of vengeance on `Uthman's assassins and declaring revolt against the caliph on the grounds that they did not acknowledge the pledge of allegiance he was paid, which some were coerced into giving. One would have thought that since they all adopted one stand, they also agreed as to who would take over should they manage to depose `Ali. Yet, that was not the case. They simply failed to agree as to who should lead Muslims in prayer.

It was the news of their march to Basrah that reached the Commander of the Faithful right before he was about to head for Syria. He thought that it would be a better idea to halt their march and deal with them before the situation got out of control. `Ali wished to face Mu`awiyah with a united front free from points of weakness. He therefore put off the march for Syria, yet, could not catch up with the Mother of the Faithful along with T̲alh̲ah and Az-Zubayr before they reached Basrah. When they did, they dismissed its governor after lashing him, and managed to sway most of its people to their side. The Mother of the Faithful together with T̲alh̲ah and Az-Zubayr were able to convince people in Basrah that the new caliph was among those who instigated the assassination of `Uthmaan and that the perpetrators were among his ranks.

During this critical juncture, there were men of wisdom and perception who played a laudable role in advising both sides and attempting to peter out a reconciliation between them. Qa'qa Ibn Amr managed to convince `Aa'ishahh, T̲alh̲ah and Az-Zubayr that they ought to reach a peaceful settlement in order to avoid bloodshed and restore unity to the Muslim nation.

`Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, hoping for a peaceful settlement, marched towards Basrah to talk personally with T̲alh̲ah and Az-Zubayr. The two armies were facing each other. `Ali gave an address to Basrites in which he said, "I am but your brother........I will avenge `Uthman's assassins." T̲alh̲ah and Az-Zubayr and Basrites were fully satisfied with what `Ali told them. The caliph also returned to his camp very satisfied. He gave strict orders to his men not to fight in any case, and kept praying all night.

But Ibn Saba and his henchmen had planned otherwise. In the darkness of night, they launched a sudden attack on '`Aa'ishah's army. Talhah and Az-Zubayr were startled by the sudden attack and deduced that `Ali could not desist from shedding Muslim blood and that he ordered a night attack. On the other hand, `Ali was shocked when he was told by Sabaites that Talhah and Az-Zubayr had taken them by surprise. He too thought that they did not try to avoid shedding Muslim blood.

Flames of war flared on one of the saddest days in Muslim history. Sedition set in and overshadowed the entire arena. The battle got its name when the Mother of the Faithful, `Aa'ishahh, may Allah be pleased with her, stepped out in the battlefield on the back to a camel riding in a *Hawdaj*, and surrounded by some of the best of the Basrah soldiers defending her with rare intrepidity. They acted as a shield warding off whoever attempted to approach her. When the caliph saw the number of slain Muslims round her camel, he had its hind legs cut off. However, fighting did not abate. Eventually, the sad battle resulted in grave casualties totaling ten thousand Muslims including Talhah and Az-Zubayr, who were defeated that day. Once again, Basrah raised the banners of loyalty to `Ali. As for the Mother of the Faithful, whose side was brought to its knees, the caliph treated her with all due respect. He paid her a visit in her residence in Basrah upon the end of the battle. He ordered that she be given a riding camel as well as all the provision she could need on her trip to Makka, to which she ultimately decided to go back. He even bid her farewell upon her departure. One is not to be surprised at the way `Ali treated the Mother of the Faithful. Despite the fact which he was against him and even instigated the battle against him, `Aa'ishahh, may Allah be pleased with her, was still the wife of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him and the Mother of the Faithful. Besides, Arab and Islamic tradition entirely forbade fighting or even harming women.

This certainly goes double for `Aa'ishahh, given her dignified status in Islam.

It goes without saying that this war is to be justly blamed on both sides. Each party lapsed into a series of wrong actions, mishandlings of the situation along with misunderstandings of the other party's stance. Owing to all those reasons, Muslims slipped into the first of a number of battles that were to exact a heavy toll on Muslims later on.

The Aftermath of Al-Jamal Battle:

Despite the rough start that `Ali's caliphate witnessed, things were soon to be back under control. He managed to hold sway over the whole of the Islamic state, with the exception of Syria, whose people chose to follow Mu`awiyah in his refusing to pledge allegiance to the caliph.

Apart from that, the Commander of the Faithful took three significant administrative decisions for purposes of organizing the internal affairs of the state and tightening his grip on it. Moreover, `Ali was well aware that an encounter between him and his lurking opponent, Mu`awiyah, was inevitable. He therefore saw the need to prepare for it.

His first decision was to change the capital of the Islamic state. `Ali realized that being the capital, Medinah was subject to unpredictable turbulences that were to violate its sanctity. Instead, he saw in Kufa prospects of a better capital for Muslims on account of a number of reasons. On one hand, most of `Ali's supporters were in Iraq. On the other hand, Kufa was closer to Syria where he expected an impending collision to take place between him and the rebels who would not pledge loyalty to him.

Secondly, `Ali decided to appoint `Abdullaah Ibn

`Abbas as governor of Basrah. He also appointed Ziyaad Ibn Abi Suyan, Mu`awiyah's half brother, to be in charge of the *Kharaj*. This was certainly a wise step on the part of the new caliph. Basrah was a highly strategic city both from the political and military perspectives. It therefore called for a man of knowledge and perception such as `Abdullaah Ibn `Abbas to be at its helm. It was also a praiseworthy idea to appoint as his assistant Ziyaad Ibn Abi Suyan, one of the area's matchless mentalities.

The Commander of the Faithful's third decision had to do with Egypt. Since Egypt was conquered at the hands of `Amr Ibn Al-`As, Muslim caliphs were fully aware of its vitally strategic importance. He appointed Qays Ibn Sa`d Ibn `Ubadah Al-Ansari, one of the wisest, most perceptive men, as its governor.

The Preparation for the Battle of Sifeen:

Qays's control of Egypt constituted a great threat on Mu`awiyah who started to prepare himself and the people of As-Sham to fight `Ali and his soldiers in a fierce battle. Mu`awiyah feared that if he went to fight `Ali from the direction of Iraq he might surround him from behind – from the direction of Egypt –with the help of the Egyptians under the command of Qays. That is why Mu`awiyah did his best to make Qays join his ranks because winning Qays on his side meant gaining about one thousand men who were under Qays's command in addition to the support of the Egyptians, and in this way he would secure himself from behind if the war broke out. However, Mu`awiyah's efforts to win Qays on his side were all in vain, for Qays remained loyal to the Commander of the Faithful, `Ali, may Allah be pleased with him. Mu`awiyah lost all hope when he received Qays's message saying: "In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Compassionate, from

Qays Ibn Sa`d to Mu`awiyah Ibn Abi Sufyaan, it is wonder that you trick me, pin hope on me, and brush my view aside. Do you want me to disobey the people in charge, who speak the truth and guide to the straight path, and are the most closest to Allah's Messenger (i.e. `Ali), and order me to obey you – how odd is this demand!"

When Mu`awiyah failed to win Qays to his side, he tried to drive a wedge between Qays and `Ali. So he spread among the people of As-Shaam that Qays has joined his ranks and that he advises him about what to do, and he also treats the Ottomans well. Such a rumor reached `Ali in Al-Kufa through his spies in As-Shaam but he did not believe at first. However, Muhammad Ibn Abi Bakr and Muhammad Ibn Ja`far Ibn Abi T̲aalib insisted that `Ali should order Qays to fight the Ottomans in Egypt who took the city of Kharbata as their stronghold. `Ali wrote to Qays ordering him to fight the ottomans but Qays refused and wrote to the `Ali saying: "If you accuse me of disloyalty, you can depose me and assign somebody else in my place". As a result, the caliph deposed him and assigned Muhammad Ibn Abi Bakr in his place, but he could not hold his position for long. Mu`awiyah and his ally `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas seized his position and killed him in 38 AH. In spite of all this, Qays remained loyal to `Ali and participated in the battle of Sifeen after he reconciled with `Ali who then realized that Qays was loyal and that it had been a conspiracy made by Mu`awiyah to divide them. `Ali then sent one of the Companions, Jareer Ibn `Abdellaah Al-Bajlyy with a message to Mu`awiyah informing him of the agreement of the Muhajireen and the Ansaar to pledge allegiance to him while T̲alh̲ah and Az-Zubayr refused, and asked him to pledge allegiance as well. When Jareer came to Mu`awiyah, the latter kept dragging out till Jareer could see for himself the support of the people and eager to revenge on the murderers of `Uthmaan whom `Ali did not punish, and made them join his army.

Mu`awiyah and `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas convinced the people that `Ali was keen on killing `Uthmaan, and that he supported his murderers.

Jareer saw all that, then he returned to Al-Kufa to report to `Ali without getting a response from Mu`awiyah, but he confirmed to `Ali that Mu`awiyah and his followers were determined to fight him. So `Ali had no other alternative but to muster his army and prepare them for fighting Mu`awiyah who was weaving conspiracies against `Ali and doing his best to turn the people against him using what happened in the battle of Al-Al-Jamal as an evidence on his claims.

The Battle of Siffeen:

Leading an army of ninety thousand soldiers, the Commander of the Faithful headed for Syria towards the end of Shawaal, 36 AH `Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, had no choice but to battle with Mu`awiyah, having again asked for his pledge of allegiance and having again been turned down. Mu`awiyah, on the other hand, set out for Iraq at the helm of an eighty five thousand soldier army to encounter Ali's troops. The two parties met at Siffeen by the Euphrates. They did not immediately plunge into fighting. Instead, messengers and delegates kept going back and forth between `Ali and Mu`awiyah. However, all attempts at hammering out a reconciliation sadly failed. Tension escalated resulting in having both parties standing at sword points. Some sporadic skirmishes took place, but did not amount to an all-out warfare. At the outset of the month of Muharram, 37 AH, these skirmishes came to a stop. Hope for effecting peace between the two antagonistic sides was renewed afresh, yet to no avail. The situation only aggravated and conditions took a turn for the worse. On Safar 1st , 37 AH, war flared.

For six days on end, grim-visaged warfare held sway, with each side striving to be victorious. Yet, none managed to bring the other to their knees. Despite the fact that the caliph personally took part in the battle and although his troops were confident that they had every reason to fight a rebel against the Commander of the Faithful, the relentless perseverance and amazing intrepidity of the people of Syria caused them to fight people of Iraq tooth and nail. On the seventh day, fighting grew even tenser as Muslims fought with unprecedented vehemence. What made the situation even worse was the killing of `Ammaar Ibn Yasir, the righteous companion whom the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, had foretold the fact that he would be killed at the hands of the transgressing party.

The death of `Ammaar Ibn Yasir enkindled enthusiasm in the hearts of Ali's soldiers as it was a solid proof of their being right. His death endorsed the stand of the Commander of the Faithful whom they fought in support. They therefore grew more confident that their opponents were the transgressing party that either had to be brought back to its senses or killed. Inside the opposite camp, news of `Amaar's death was indeed significant. Those who knew of the Prophet's prediction were struck by the fact that they were the transgressing party. Hence, they immediately stopped fighting. Placed in a tight corner, Mu`awiyah stepped out to address those soldiers among his ranks who would not fight anymore, saying: "Why are you pulling away? `Ammaar was killed by those who sent him to us. We were only defending ourselves."

Al-Ashtar, one of Ali's best and most intrepid soldiers in the battle of S̲iffeen, launched a fierce campaign against Mu`awiyah's army. He managed to approach the camp of Mu`awiyah, who almost fled the battlefield, had it not been for his sense of shame. Mu`awiyah was perceptive enough to realize that his opponent was not far from waving the banners of triumph. At that point, he called on his friend, `Amr Ibn Al-`Aas to handle the deteriorating situation.

`Amr suggested holding up books of the Glorious Qur'an at sword points and asking to resort to the Holy Book for arbitration. `Amr's idea succeeded in bringing fighting to a halt. That was indeed a subtle maneuver on the part of `Amr Ibn Al-`As whereby he was able to deceive `Ali's soldiers. The caliph tried hard to explain to his troops how they were taken in at a time when they almost attained victory. Nonetheless, his soldiers refused to listen to him. Instead, they outspokenly demanded: "Resort to Allah's Holy Book, `Ali." `Ali therefore was forced to order fighting to stop and to reluctantly accept arbitration. The plan was that each side was to choose a representative. `Ali initially chose `Abdullah Ibn `Abbaas for the job. However, he was pressured into accepting Abu Musa Al-Ash`aryy instead. On the other hand, Mu`awiyah's side opted for `Amr Ibn Al-`As. The arbitration contract was then written down stipulating that the verdict was to be pronounced at Doowmat Al-Jandal, in Ramadan, 37 AH

This pulls down the curtain on the battle of Siffeen which exacted a heavy toll on Muslims, with casualties totaling to seventy thousand Muslims, including hundreds of the Prophet's companions, along with reciters of the Qur'an and many scholars. The whole episode was a bullet aimed at Islam. Similar to the battle of Al-Jandal, Muslims committed a grievous mistake by fighting one another and shedding each other's blood.

Though the battle of Siffeen_came to an end when fighting between both sides stopped, the conditions Mu`awiyah was in were totally different from those `Ali was in. People of Syria grew more attached to Mu`awiyah. They therefore were divided into two groups: `Ali's Shia (i.e. supporters) whose loyalty to him remained unshaken, and the Kharijites who refused the idea of arbitration, and who asked the Commander of the Faithful not to go through with it and to continue to fight Mu`awiyah instead. When `Ali refused to listen to them, they rose against him and would not go back to Al-Kufah. The Kharijites were thus against both `Ali and Mu`awiyah. What matters most is that they were a thorn in `Ali's side. They were a constant distraction preventing `Ali from focusing on his opponent, Mu`awiyah, who, in turn, made an excellent use of the truce organizing his ranks and preparing for a future encounter.

The Arbitration:

At-Tabari narrates the episode of the arbitration as such: `Ali sent four hundred men led by Shurayh Ibn Hane' Al-Harethi and `Abdullah Ibn `Abbas to lead them in prayer and be in charge of their affairs. Among his delegates was Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari, too. Mu`awiyah sent `Amr Ibn Al-`As along with four hundred men from Syria. The two delegations met at Dawmat Al-Jandal. The encounter was witnessed by `Abdullah Ibn `Umar, `Abdullah Ibn Az-Zubayr and Al-Mugheerah Ibn Shu`bah Ath-Thaqafeyy. The two arbitrators met, whereupon `Amr Ibn Al-`As gave precedence to Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari saying: "You are a companion of the Prophet's and you are also my elder. So you speak first." It was `Amr's plan to let Abu Musa precede him all the way so that he would be first to depose `Ali. They contemplated the issue. `Amr suggested that Mu`awiyah be in charge, but Abu Musa rejected. `Amr next suggested his son, and again Abu Musa rejected. Abu Musa, in turn, suggested `Abdullah Ibn `Umar, yet `Amr did not accept. `Amr that asked him: "What do you think we should do, then?" "I think we should depose both men," answered Abu Musa, "and leave the whole affair up to Muslims to choose whomever they please." `Amr returned, "I agree."

The two arbitrators then stepped out to speak to the gathered delegates. `Amr said: " Tell them that we have reached an agreement, Abu Musa." Abu Musa took the floor and spoke saying: "`Amr and I have agreed on something which we pray shall be to the benefit of this nation." `Amr commented: "He speaks the truth. Step forward and speak, Abu Musa." So Abu Musa did. Ibn `Abbas cried: "Woe unto you! I swear I think he has deceived you. If you have truly agreed on something, let him break it to us first, then you take the floor. I would not put it beyond him that he only pretended to agree with you, but will object to what you say the moment you step out to address the public." Abu Musa returned, "We have reached an agreement."

Abu Musa then stepped forward and took the floor. He started off praising Allah, exalted be He. He then proceeded to say: "Fellow Muslims, we have contemplated the issue and have concluded that nothing would be more beneficial to this nation or would help more to bring it together except one thing that `Amr and I have agreed on. We decided to depose both `Ali and Mu`awiyah. So take the matter in your hands and appoint whomever you believe is best suited for the post." He then stepped down and `Amr took the floor. He began his words by praising Allah and glorifying Him. He then said: "As you heard, Abu Musa has just deposed his friend (i.e. `Ali). As for me, I endorse my friend (i.e. Mu`awiyah) as he is `Uthmaan's companion. He demands that he be avenged and he is the one most entitled to succeed him."

Just as asking to resort to the arbitration of the Qur'an was a ploy devised by `Amr, the result of the arbitration, too, was a trap on the part of `Amr. Unfortunately, Abu Musa was taken in too easily. He was shocked at this bitter act of betrayal. So he insulted `Amr. `Amr, too, returned the insults. Swear words and libels flew between the two parties until the gathering broke up. People of Syria went back to Mu`awiyah thinking they won the round. They therefore addressed him as the caliph. `Ali's supporters went back to Kufah, more dedicated to him and ever more committed. The result of the arbitration only caused them to grow closer to `Ali and to be more confident that he did merit the caliphate.

The Kharijites:

Among the other party, who were originally part of `Ali's ranks in Seffeen, but who revolted against him when he accepted the arbitration, were the Kharijites. They constituted a third party that recognized neither `Ali nor Mu`awiyah. When the results of the arbitration came in, the Commander of the Faithful asked them to return to his troops in order to fight Mu`awiyah and the entire people of Syria. They insolently answered: "An act of disobeying Allah did not upset you. Instead, you were outraged for being deposed. If you admit infidelity then repent your sin, we will consider the issue. Otherwise, we will fight you. Allah loves not the traitors." Thereupon, `Ali invoked Allah's curse on them saying: "After I had believed in Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated with him and striven for the cause of Allah, you expect me to admit infidelity? I will have gone astray should I do." He then turned and walked away.

`Ali then called on the companions to march to Syria afresh to fight Mu`awiyah and his troops. Shockingly, the Kharijites rebelled against everyone, violated the bounds of Islam, spread mischief in the land, held permissible what Allah forbade, shed Muslims' blood and mutilated their bodies. It became evident that they had to be annihilated before heading for Syria. `Ali sent them a messenger to order them to refrain from mischief, yet they killed him. He therefore made it to them himself at the helm of four thousand soldiers. He first asked them to hand in the murderers of `Abdullah Ibn Khabab - the Prophet's companion and his wife - so as to take vengeance on them. Their reply was that they were all the murderers and that they too thought that shedding their blood would not be unlawful. A debate took place between `Ali and the Kharijites, the upshot of which was that eight thousand men returned to their senses, whereas four thousand others obstinately refused to. They therefore engaged in a lost battle against the Commander of the Faithful, who, in turn, managed to annihilate the transgressing party, with only a few survivors left. On the other hand, casualties in `Ali's ranks did not exceed seven or eight men. This battle, Al-Nahrawaan, took place to the south east of Baghdad in 38 AH. Nevertheless, survivors of this battle dispersed in various areas where they found listening ears. They thus succeeded in giving rise to several Kharijite factions that spread and continued to play an influential role for a considerable period of time.

The Final Phase of `Ali's Caliphate:

Though the caliphate of `Ali was soaked in problems and wars, the period following Al-Nahrawaan battle was without a doubt one of the worst and certainly most complicated ever. It became crystal clear that `Ali's rule was drawing to an end. In the meantime, his opponent, Mu`awiyah, was making the best use of the fact that people of Syria were rallied round him and supported him wholeheartedly. Further, he was delighted to watch the gap grow wider between `Ali and his supporters. Mu`awiyah hence cashed in on the situation seizing many of the provinces that were subject to `Ali's rule such as Egypt, Hijaz and

Yemen. This, by necessity, dwarfed the power of the caliph compared to Mu`awiyah's ever growing power and far-stretching hegemony.

The reason why things took that turn was because `Ali never headed for Syria to deal with Mu`awiyah. He was sadly let down by his men who were reluctant to go to war behind him and who even sneaked out of his camp in Kufah. `Ali was therefore devastated at his soldiers' attitude. Worse still, they simply watched Mu`awiyah launch attacks on the provinces that were subject to `Ali's rule until he was only left with Iraq and Persia. `Ali's men never lifted a finger to defend their caliph. That way, it becomes obvious that `Ali's men were largely responsible for his failing to face Mu`awiyah. Conversely, Mu`awiyah's men were all at his beck and call. `Ali wished he would trade ten of his men for one of Mu`awiyah's.

Just as `Ali was placed in a tight corner, so was Mu`awiyah. The Romans, seizing the opportunity of the civil strife among Muslims, attempted to assault the northern borders of the Muslim state in northern Syria. For a while, Mu`awiyah used to make peace with them in return for money. However, they were still a thorn in his side. It was in the year 40 AH that Mu`awiyah sent a message to `Ali asking him to bring the warfare between the two of them to an end. He proposed that `Ali should keep Iraq, while he should keep Syria, and that neither should launch attacks on the other. `Ali accepted his proposal and they made peace.

The Death of the Commander of the Faithful:

It was shortly after concluding this peace agreement that three of the Kharijites: `Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn Maljam, Al-Barak Ibn `Abdellah and `Amr Ibn Bakr met. They discussed people's affairs, criticized their ruler's policies, grieved the death of those killed in Al-Nahrawaan battle and prayed that they be forgiven. They then said to one another: "They were our fellow brothers who used to call on people to worship Allah (for such were the false claims of the Kharijites) and who never hesitated to do what is right in the eyes of Allah. If we kill those masters of evil, we will rid the state of them and avenge our brothers' death." Therefore, Ibn Maljam said: "I will rid you of `Ali Ibn Abi Talib." Al-Barak Ibn `Abdellah said: "I will rid you of Mu`awiyah Ibn Abi Sufyan." `Amr Ibn Bakr said: "I will rid you of `Amr Ibn Al-`As." They then made a solemn pledge and agreed to put their plan into effect on Ramadan 17th, 40 A H.

As for Ibn Maljam, he succeeded in murdering `Ali Ibn Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, when he ambushed him as the latter stepped out of his house to perform the dawn prayer at Al-Jami` Mosque. However, Al-Barak Ibn `Abdellah and `Amr Ibn Bakr missed their targets. That way `Ali was martyred at the age of sixty three, ending a turbulent period of rule that lasted for four years and nine months.

It is indeed amazing to note that the death of this revered companion who enjoyed a dignified status in Islam ushered a new era of stability in the Muslim state, after a long period of sedition that resulted in having people bear grudges against one another. Right upon the death of `Ali, people pledged loyalty to his son, Al-Hassan, as the new caliph. Al-Hassan was a devout Muslim who genuinely wished to avoid Muslim bloodshed. He hated the idea of fighting Mu`awiyah and declared his stance as regards his father's opponent. Al-Hassan was well-aware that people of Iraq were mainly responsible for what his father was made to go through during his strife with Mu`awiyah. He was convinced that they were not the kind of people who could bring about victory, whose vows could be trusted or whom any leader could take pride in. Owing to all these reasons, Al-Hassan immediately started exchanging messages with Mu`awiyah concerning handing over Muslims' affairs and pledging allegiance to him on a set of conditions which they agreed on during their meeting in Al-Kufah in Rabee` Al-Awal, 41 AH, which came to be known as the Jama`ah (the union) year since all Muslims unanimously agreed on a single caliph, namely Mu`awiyah Ibn Abi Sufyan. This therefore brings to an end one of the saddest episodes in Muslim history. No sooner did Muslims reunite under the leadership of Mu`awiyah than they resumed Muslim conquests anew, spreading Islam in yet new parts of the world.

عمر بن عبد العزيز رضي الله عنه

`Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez

(may Allah be pleased with him)

"He was the one who could lead the people in Salaah just like the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, used to do."

Anas Ibn Malik رضي الله عنه

- Name and Lineage
- An Ideal Boy in His Childhood
- His Merits and Virtues
- `Umar before Becoming the Caliph
- His Caliphate
- `Umar's Exemplary Justice
- `Umar's Ascetic Life
- His Sense of Responsibility
- `Umar Loathed Brides
- `Umar, the Caliph, Entertains His Guests
- Some of `Umar's Speeches
- `Umar's Terminal Illness and Death
- `Umar's Advice to the New Caliph
- The Caliph Passes Away
- `Umar's Last Speech
- `Umar's Caliphate and Status

Name and Lineage:

Ibn Katheer, may Allah rest his soul in peace, states: `Umar Ibn `Abdul-`Azeez, may Allah be pleased with him, is the son of Marawaan Ibn Al-Hakam Ibn Abi Al-`Aas Ibn Umayyah Ibn `Abd Shams Ibn `Abd Manaaf of Quraysh. He was known as Abu Hafs and the Righteous Caliph.

According to As-Syooti, may Allah rest his soul in peace, `Umar Ibn `Abdel`Azeez was born in Helwaan, Egypt, in the year sixty one or sixty three AH, during the reign of his father. His mother is Umm `Aasim daughter of `Aasim Ibn `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him.

Sufyaan Ath-Thawri is reported to have said about `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez: "He is the fifth Rightly-Guided Muslim Caliph, after Abu-Bakr, `Umar, `Uthmaan and `Ali." (Narrated by Abu Dawood in his *Sunan.*)

`Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez, may Allah be pleased with him, had a scar on his face due to being kicked by a horse in his childhood. When his father saw him injured, he kept wiping the blood off his son's face and told him, "If you are the scar-faced Ummyyad, you are indeed the fortunate one of us." (Reported by Ibn `Asaakir.)

`Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab is reported to have said: "There will be one of my offspring who is scar-faced and his justice will fill the earth." His prophecy came true". Ibn `Umar is also quoted as saying: "We would say that there would come a man of the offspring of `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab who would tread in his great grandfather's footsteps. Bilaal Ibn `Abdellaah Ibn `Umar had a mole on the face, so, we thought it was him, till `Umar Ibn `Abel `Azeez came along."

An Ideal Boy in His Childhood:

As a little boy, `Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, memorized the Glorious Qur'an, so, his father sent him to get further education in Madeenah. He used to frequent the gatherings of `Ubaydillaah Ibn `Abdellaah to learn from him.

As a child, `Umar once cried for no apparent reason, when his mother learnt that, she sent for him and asked him why he had been crying. He told her, "I remembered death." Hearing that, his mother burst into tears.

His Merits and Virtues:

Zayd Ibn Haytham quotes Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, as saying: "`Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez was the prayer Imam who resembled the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessing be up on him, the most; he perfected prostrating himself before Almighty Allah and did not spend a long time in the standing and sitting positions."

Muhammad Ibn Al-Husayn described `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez as "the select of the Umayyads and that he would be resurrected (on the Day of Judgment) as if he were a whole nation."

Maymoon Ibn Mahraan is reported to have said: "Compared with `Umar (i.e. `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez), scholars were but disciples."

One day, a man told `Umar: "I saw the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, in a vision, with Abu Bakr to his right and `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab to his left; there were two disputing men, while you were in the Prophet's presence. The

Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, told you: "O `Umar, always take these men, i.e. Abu Bakr and Ibn Al-Khattaab, as an example to be followed." The man swore to `Umar he had really seen that vision, so, `Umar burst into tears, as he was deeply moved by it."

As Madeenah's Ruler, `Umar renovated and extended the Prophet's mosque. He was a just, pious ruler, when he was faced with a perplexing situation that called for sound judgment, he would consult ten of Madeenah's scholars and would do as they say.

Rabee`ah Ibn Abi `Abder-Rahmaan said that `Umar Ibn Abdul-`Azeez always dreaded wronging anyone or making any mistake, and so, Rabee`ah would always assure him that was not the case.

Anas Ibn Malik said that `Umar Ibn `Abdul-`Azeez was the one who could lead the people in *Salaah* just like the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, used to do; `Umar used to bow and prostrate properly during *Salaah*, and used to avoid spending a long time standing or kneeling during praying.

Abu An-Nadr Al-Madeeni saw Sulaymaan Ibn Yasaar coming out of `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez's house, so, Al-Madeeni asked him if he had gone to `Umar's to teach him some juristic rulings and Islamic teachings. Sulaymaan answered in the affirmative; so, Al-Madeeni said: "`Umar is more knowledgeable than you all."

Al-Layth said: "A man who went with `Umar's son and Ibn `Abbaas to `Umar's place came back and told me: "Whenever we discussed any topic, we would realise `Umar knew more about it; scholars, to `Umar, are mere disciples."

Imam Malik narrates that when `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez was ousted as Madenah's Ruler, in the year 93 AH, and was forced to leave it, he looked back at the city and cried, then he told his servant: " Muzaahim said, "I dread that it was Madeenah which banished us." He meant that he dreaded he was so bad and mean that Allah had expelled him from Madeenah.

Isma`eel Ibn Abi Hakeem reports that he heard `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez saying: "I left Madeenah as a scholar who was unparalleled, but here in the Levant, I have forgotten a lot of what I had learnt."

When Sulaymaan and `Umar were at the mount of `Arafah, there were innumerous people around, so, `Umar told him: "These are your citizens one day, you will be responsible for them." In another narration, `Umar added: "They will be your foes on the Day of Judgment." Sulaymaan shed tears, and said: "I seek the Help of Almighty Allah."

Az-Zuhri narrates that Al-Waleed once sent for `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez, who went to meet him, only to find him rather gloomy. Al-Waleed welcomed `Umar told him to have a seat, and asked him: "How shall we punish a man who curses the Caliph? Shall he be executed? But, `Umar did not reply, so, Al-Waleed asked the same question again and still, `Umar did not comment. When he asked it a third time, `Umar said: "Did that man kill anyone, Commander of the Believers?" Al-Waleed replied: "No, but he cursed me." So, `Umar replied: "He is to be only reprimanded, then." Hearing this, Al-Waleed was furious and left the place. Then, his executioner told `Umar to leave, so, he did. As he went out, strong winds were blowing so hard that he thought they were the Caliph's messenger pushing him to go back to him.

One day the Commander of the Believers, Sulaymaan Ibn `Abdel Malik, took `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez to show him the former's camp which swarmed with horses, camels, mules and many other things. Sulaymaan asked `Umar what he thought of all that. `Umar replied: "I see a world where all devour one another and you are responsible for it." As they approached the camp, they saw a crow holding a piece of bread by its beak, then, the crow flew uttering a loud shriek. Sulaymaan said to `Umar, "What was that?" `Umar replied, "I don't know." Sulaymaan asked again, "What do you think it said?" `Umar replied: "As if the crow said: "I wonder where this piece of bread came from and where it will end up." Sulaymaan found his reply rather odd, so, `Umar elaborated: "I am always shooed to learn that some people believe in Allah yet, disobey Him; that some are aware of the evil of the devil, yet obey him and that some know what life is all about, yet, they trust it.'' A while later, rain and thunder shook the silence of the area, which took Sulaymaan aback, while `Umar was laughing. Sulaymaan asked `Umar: "Laughing?" `Umar replied: "Yes, these are signs of Allah's Mercy on us in this world. Can you imagine how his Wrath and Punishment will be like in the Hereafter?"

One night, `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez saw the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, in a vision, in a green meadow, and heard him, peace and blessings be upon him, saying: "You will be my nation's ruler, so be just and spare people's blood. Your name, to people, is `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez, but to Allah, your name is Jabir (just and compassionate)."

Ibraheem As-Sukooni narrates that `Umar said, "I have stopped lying since I realized lying was a detestable vice."

Qays Ibn Jubayr said that among the Umayyads, `Umar was like the believer of Pharaoh's folks."

Maymoon Ibn Mahraan said that Allah had always sent Prophet, for the people; after that, he sent them `Umar Ibn `Abel-`Azeez.

Wahb Ibn Munabbih said that `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez was the nation's guiding light in his era.

`Umar before Becoming the Caliph:

Many people used to blame `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez for his wealth and famous strutting and proud gait. `Umar and his brother had inherited a lot of money, properties and animals from their father.

One day, `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez went to see his uncle `Abdel-Malik who noticed that `Umar was kind of limping. So, `Abdel-Malik asked him why he was not strutting as usual, and `Umar replied: "I have a small wound." `Abdel-Malik asked him: "Where?". `Umar replied: "Between my inner thigh and scrotum." `Abdel-Malik was surprised at his openness and said to Rooh Ibn Zinba': "By Allah, if I asked one of your folks that question, he would never give me such an open answer."

`Umar and `Abdel-Malik were very close, and it is narrated that upon `Abdel-Malik's death, `Umar was so upset and sad that he wore rags under Ins clothes for seventy days.

His Caliphate:

`Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez became the Caliph in the month of Safar, 99 AH, and remained in power for two years and five months, a period similar to the Caliphate of Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him.

During his reign, `Umar's justice was tasted everywhere; he settled all disputes, not to mention introducing praiseworthy innovations.

When receiving the decree of his predecessor, naming him the new Caliph, `Umar was dismayed, and said: "I never invoked Allah to make me the Caliph." When he was offered the horse of the Caliph, `Umar insisted on mounting nothing but his mule. Asked what to do with the Caliph's stallion, he told its keepers to sell it and deposit the money in the *Bayt Al-Maal*, because he wanted to go around on his mule.

After the funeral of his predecessor, `Umar was seen rather gloomy. His servant asked him why he was so sad and worried, `Umar replied: "Anyone in my shoes should be so; I must deliver and grant all the nation's citizens all their rights, whether they demand them, or not."

`Amr Ibn Muhaajir says: "When `Umar became Caliph he gathered the people, praised Allah, then said: "O people there is no Book but the Qur'an, and there is no Prophet after Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. I will not impose injustice on you, I will only execute Allah's Orders. Also, I am not an innovator of blameworthy innovations, rather, I follow Allah's teachings. I am no better than any of you, rather, I shoulder a very heavy responsibility. Mind you, he who flees from an unjust Imam, is not unjust; Lo! No one should be obeyed at the expense of disobeying the Creator."

Az-Zuhri is reported to have said: `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez wrote to Salim Ibn `Abdellaah asking to tell him what `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab did regarding charity. Ibn `Abdellaah replied to `Umar and furnished him with all the information he asked for, and added: "If you do with the help of those around you, what `Umar did in his time and age, with the help of those around him, you will be better than him."

`Umar burst into tears when he ascended to the throne and asked a man if he was worried about his future under his caliphate; so the man asked if `Umar loved money. `Umar said, "No"; the man told him not to worry, for Allah would help him.

When `Umar became the Caliph he gathered the sons of Marawaan and told them: "The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, had money which he might have spent to support the young ones of Banu Haashim and helped their men to pay marriage expenses. When his daughter Faatimah asked him to give some to her, he refused. That continued in the times of Abu Bakr and `Umar, but, Marawaan took it. Now it is mine, and since the Prophet refused to give it to Faatimah, I cannot keep it, so, bear witness that things will be just like they were in the days of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him.

So, `Umar started with his folk and family; he took their possessions and gave their money to the treasury.

One day, `Anbasah Ibn Sa`eed Ibn Al-`Aas went to meet `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez. He told him: "O Commander of the Believers, your predecessors used to provide for us, but you stopped that; I have children and a farm, do you permit me to farm my land to support my children?" `Umar replied: "The best of you, O people, is he who does without the state's allowance; my good man, remember death often, and if you cannot make ends meet, work hard to better your condition, and if you are solvent, do not be a spendthrift."

Furaat Ibn As-Saa'ib narrates that `Umar told his wife

Faatimah Bint `Abdel-Malik, who had matchless precious jewels that were a present from her father, to return her then to the state's treasury, or to let me part with you", for he could not be with her and the jewels in one house. She said to him: "I choose you over these jewels and much more." So, `Umar ordered the jewels to be taken to the treasury. After `Umar's death, Yazeed told Faatimah that he could give her the jewels back, but she refused and said, "I would never do what `Umar did not condone when he was alive.

`Abdel-`Azeez narrates that some of `Umar's men wrote him to let him know that their city needed a lot of restoration and asked for money to fund that. `Umar replied saying: "When you read this message, start by fortifying your city with justice and rid it of injustice, that will restore it, peace be with you!"

`Umar's Exemplary Justice:

One day, `Abdullaah Ibn `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez stopped by a monk in the middle of the desert, who had not been in the habit of meeting passers by, he went to meet `Abdullaah and asked him: "Do you know why I have come to see you?" `Abdullaah answered in the negative, so the monk said: "Because of your father `Umar the just ruler who is like Rajab, among the sacred months." Ayyoob Ibn Sa`eed explained the saying that the monk meant, by referring to those three months Dhul Qa`dah, Dhul Hijjah and Muharram, to refer to Abu Bakr," `Umar, `Uthmaan and he referred to `Umar Ibn `Abdel-Azeez as the month of Rajab.

Hasan Al-Qassaab narrates: One day I saw wolves among grazing sheep in the desert during the era of `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez and I wondered how the wolf did not try to attack the sheep. The shepherd told me: "The ruler is righteous, so everything and every body here can only be good and peaceful."

Malik Ibn Dinaar reports that when `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez become the Caliph, the shepherds of the state kept wondering about the pious new ruler whose justice inspired the wolves to stay away from their sheep.

Moosa Ibn 'A`yan narrates that he would take his sheep to graze in `Umar's reign, and wolves would be among them and never caused any harm. However one night, a wolf attacked a sheep and killed it, so, Ibn 'A`yan guessed that `Umar had just died, he went to see if that was true, and it turned out to be so.

Al-Waleed Ibn Muslim reports that a man in Khurasan said: "In a vision, I had seen a man who told me to swear allegiance to the scar-faced `Umayyad for he would be a just ruler. So, I kept wondering if each new ruler was him, till `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez came to me in my dreams three times and told me the same, so I went to swear allegiance to `Umar."

`Abdel-`Azeez son of `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez narrates that Abu Ja`fa Al-Mansoor once asked him: "How much did your father own when he become the Caliph?" I said, "40,000 dinars." He asked: "And how much did he own before his death?" I replied: "400 dinars only; if he had lived longer, the sum would have decreased more."

Maymoon Ibn Mahraan narrates that he heard `Umar say: "If I was to be your Caliph for fifty years, I would not be able to make justice prevail irrevocably. I wish to be just with you, but I fear you may not be able to take it. I want your hearts to feel at ease with what is right."

`Umar Ibn Usayd is reported to have said that during `Umar's reign, people would bring them loads of money and put it at their disposal, but we would tell them to take their money as `Umar had made all rich.

Juwayriyyah narrates: One day we went to see Faatimah Bint `Ali Ibn Abi Taalib, may Allah be pleased with him. She praised `Umar Ibn Abdel-`Azeez and said: "Had he lived on, we would not have needed anyone else."

`Umar's Ascetic Life:

Maslamah Ibn `Abdel-Malik narrates: One day, I visited `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez when he was sick, and I found him wearing an unclean shirt, so I asked his wife Faatimah Bint Abdel-Malik why she did not wash his shirt. She replied that it was his only shirt.

`Umar's servant Abu Umayyah narrates: One day, my lady gave me lentils for lunch, and as this was what I had daily, I complained about it, but she said it was the food of the Commander of Believers."

One day, `Umar went to the toilet, and found nothing to shave his pubic hair with but a very rugged object.

At his death, `Umar sent Abu Umayyah to the monastery people to give them a dinar in return for the spot where he would be buried. He would not consent to being buried there if they did not accept it. They reluctantly accepted the money fearing he might really decide not to be buried there.

`Awn Ibn Al-Mu`amma relates that `Umar once asked his wife for grapes. She wondered at his request and asked him. "You do not have a dirham to buy grapes?" He replied: "This is easier than suffering from the chains of Hell-Fire."

His Sense of Responsibility:

Sahl Ibn Sadaqah narrates that he heard people crying in `Umar's house the day he became the Caliph; so he asked what was it all about, and was told that `Umar had told his slaves that if they wanted to be emancipated, he was ready to let them go free, for he had come the ruler and feared he would not have enough time to look after their affairs. The slaves cried as they did not want to leave the house.

His wife, Faatimah relates that `Umar would always stay at the prayer place in the house, crying and invoking Allah till he fell asleep, then he would wake up and do the same all night long.

In the same connection, Al-Waleed Ibn Abi As-Saaib reports that `Umar was the most God-fearing man he had ever known.

Sa`eed Ibn Suwayd narrates that once `Umar led people in *Jum`ah* prayer while wearing a badly mended shirt. A man told him: "O Commander of Believers, Allah has bestowed His Graces on you, so, get good clothes. `Umar looked down, then up and said: "The best of deeds is that done when mandated, and the best of forgiveness is that done when one is in power."

His wife Faatimah is reported to have said: "Throughout his caliphate, `Umar was too busy to satisfy his sexual desire."

`Aṯaa' Ibn Rabaah̲ narratea that Faatimah, `Umar's wife, once said that she found `Umar weeping one day, and asked him why he was weeping, and he replied: "O Faatimah, I have become the Caliph of Muhammad's nation; with all its people; I kept thinking of the poor who are hungry, the destitute sick people, those who do not have good clothes, the oppressed who are done injustice, the strangers, the elderly, the men who have many children and little money, and people from all walks of life all over the country, and I remembered that Allah will reckon me about them on Doomsday, so I feared I would not be able to defend myself, then I found myself in tears.

Humayd reports that Al-Hasan had dictated him a message to `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez in which he told him he had many children, but was rather poor, so `Umar ordered to send Al-Hasan some money.

Juwayriyyah Ibn 'Asmaa' narrates that `Umar had said: "I always aspire for more; when I get some worldly bounty, I aspire for what better, and if I was given what is best about this world, I would aspire to get the best of rewards, i.e. Paradise.

`Amr Ibn Muhaajir says: `Umar Ibn `Abdel-Azeez's daily budget was two dirhams only." He is alsoreported to have said: "`Umar would light a candle to write down his notes about the Muslims' affairs; when he finished, he would blow it off and write down his own notes."

It is reported that Al-Hakam Ibn `Umar said: "The Caliph would always have 300 guards and 300 policeman, but `Umar told his guards: "My fate protects me and guards me; if you stay your pay will be 10 dinars, if you do not like it, you can go join your folks."

`Umar Loathed Brides:

`Amr Ibn Muhajir is reported to have said: One day

\`Umar Ibn Abdel-\`Azeez wanted to have some apples, so a man gave him some which grew at his home. \`Umar saw them and said. "The apples are really great and have a lovely smell. Take them, my boy, to the man who sent them, give him my best greeting and tell him that I liked his present a lot". Then \`Amr replied: "O Commander of the Believers, he is your cousin and relative. You know the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, used to accept gifts \`Umar replied: "How can you say that?! A gift was a present to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, but to me, a gift is a bribe.

Ibraheem Ibn Maysarah is reported to have said: "The only man I saw \`Umar punishing physically, during his caliphate, was the man who accepted a bribe from Mu\`awiyah. He was whipped three lashes."

\`Umar, the Caliph, Entertains His Guests:

Rajaa' Ibn Haywah narrates that he once spent an evening at \`Umar's, then the lantern went out, and the valet was asleep and did not notice that, he told \`Umar to wake the valet up, but he refused, so Rajaa' offered to go rekindle its light. Again, \`Umar refused and said: " You can't do things for me here, you are my guest." Then, \`Umar went to get oil for the lantern, and came back after lighting it anew."

Nu\`aym narrates that \`Umar once told him that he had not been much of a talker, lest people would think he was showing off.

Makhool is reported to have said: "I swear that \`Umar Ibn Abdel-\`Azeez was the most ascetic, God-fearing man I ever met."

Sa`eed Ibn `Uroobah reports that `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez would tremble with fear and awe when death was mentioned, out of fear of being reckoned by Almighty Allah.

It is reported that `Aṯaa' said: "`Umar would gather scholars every night, and discuss death and Doomsday till they would burst into tears."

`Ubaydellaah Ibn Al-`Ayzaar narrates that `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez once addressed the people, while standing on a clay stand and told them: "O people, be righteous in private, so that your apparent affairs would be alright, work for the Hereafter for your worldly life to go well, and always remember that death is round the corner. Peace be with you!"

Wuhayb Ibn Al-Ward says that Banu Marawan went one day to `Umar's residence and told his son `Abdel-Malik: "Tell your father that Caliphs before him were very generous to us and revered us, but your father has denied us all that." So, the boy told his father what they said, and went back to them with this reply: "My Father tells you that he fears to be tortured on the Day of Judgment if he disobeys Allah."

Al-Awzaa`i narrates that `Umar had always urged people to seek guidance and wisdom in the words and deeds of wise, righteous people of the past generations.

One day, a man asked `Umar Ibn Abdel-`Azeez for advice, so `Umar told him: "Always be pious and conscious of Allah, that will render life a lot easier, and Allah will be most generous with you."

Abu `Amr reports that one day, Usamah Ibn Zayd's daughter went to see `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez; on seeing her, he got up and went to receive her, then he humbly sat before her and granted all her requests.

Al-Hajjaaj Ibn `Anbasah narrates that the Marawaan once agreed to try to influence `Umar by being funny and humorous with him. So they went to see him and one of them started joking. Then `Umar looked at the joker, but another man started to joke, too. `Umar asked them if they had come to joke around; he criticized their attitude, and urged them to discuss and talk about the Qur'an and its teachings wherever they gather, and if not the Qur'an, then the *Sunnah* or if not, the explanations of the Prophet's sayings.

`Umar Ibn H̱afṣ said that `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez once told him to always think well of anything a Muslim told him, as long as his words were not to read mischievous meanings between the lines.

Shu`ayb said that, one day `Umar's son, `Abdul-Malik, went to see his father and asked him: "O Commander of Believers, what will you answer Allah if he asks you in the Hereafter about the blameworthy innovations you never abolished and the praiseworthy ones you never encouraged?" `Umar; his father, replied: "May Allah bless you and have mercy upon you! You are such a good son! Your people (the Marawans) are very adamant and demanding about keeping their wealth; I did not wish to take much from them by force lest this would lead to bloodshed and massacres. By Allah, I would rather the world ended then have a few drops of blood shed because of me. Don't you want your father to keep abolishing blameworthy innovations and encouraging praiseworthy ones?

Mu`maar narrates that `Umar said: "The real winners are those who abstain from idle arguments, wrath and greed."

Arta'ah Ibn Al-Mundher reports that `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez was once advised to take guards and be careful lest his food was poisoned, but he said: "If you think I fear anything before Doomsday, then you should not feel secure around me."

`Adyy Ibn Al-Fadl reports that in one of `Umar's speeches the latter said: "O people, fear Allah, and when you invoke Him and ask for things from Him, do not keep any wish back, for Allah may grant you anything, even if you think your request is impossible!"

Some of `Umar's Speeches:

Hajib Ibn Khaleefah Al-Burjumyy reports that he once listened to `Umar Ibn `Abdel-Azeez giving one of his speeches, during his reign; `Umar said: "The Prophetic tradition, and the traditions of Abu Bakr and `Umar Ibn Al-Khattab are like doctrines we must follow; as for the traditions of other, they be put aside."

Ibn Abi `Ablah narrates that he went once on the first day of the Bairam to see `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez; he found many people at his house who kept wishing that Allah would accept his, and their good deeds. `Umar humbly wished them the same. Ibn Abi `Ablah was impressed by this, and realized it was the way how all Muslims should exchange greetings on special occasions and feasts.

When `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez assigned `Amr Ibn Qays to be the ruler of As-Saa'ifah, he told him thus: "Honor those who do good, forgive those who do wrong, do not address the people while in front, lest you would get killed, and do not be at the rear, lest you would fail; you would better address the people while in the middle of the crowd, so that they can see and hear you well.

One day, Al-Jarraah Ibn `Abdellaah wrote to `Umar telling him that the people of Khurasan had gone really bad and must he harshly disciplined. He meant to ask the permission of the commander of believers to employ the iron-fist strategy. But, `Umar wrote back this reply: "I got your message telling me that the people of Khurasan bad gone really bad and must be harshly disciplined. I do not agree with you, but I think Justice and truth will correct them, spread these principles among them. Peace be with you!"

Umayyah Ibn Zayd Al-Qurashi said that `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez would always say: "O Allah I seek refuge in you from uttering wrong, evil words" before dictating his scribes.

Jareer Ibn `Uthman Ar-Rahbi once went with his father to meet `Umar Ibn `Abdel`Azeez, `Umar asked how Jareer was and advised his father to teach him the best of all wisdom. When the father asked what that was, `Umar replied: "To be content and to never harm anybody."

`Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez once asked Muhammad Ibn Ka`ab Al-Qurazy to tell him what justice was. The latter said: "Oh! That is a difficult question, but I may say that it is to be a father for the young, a son for the elderly, a brother to the youth and to women. It is also to punish people according to their mistakes and their build, and never to whip any one out of anger lest one would be a transgressor."

Az-Zuhri narrates that `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez used to perform *Wudoo'* after holding anything that fire touches, even sugar.

Wuhayb narrates that `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez said: "You would all better speak a little and act a lot."

The Umayyads used to abuse `Ali Ibn Abi Taalib in speeches, but when `Umar Ibn Abdul-`Azeez became the Caliph, he put an end to that by writing to his provincial rulers, ordering them to stop that tradition and quoted the verse: "

"إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاء ذِي الْقُرْبَى وَيَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاء وَالْمُنكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ
يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُون" (النحل: ٩٠)

"Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and he forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: he instructs you, that ye may receive admonition." (An-Nahl: 90) This verse was always quoted in their speeches from then onwards.

`Abdullaah Ibn Al-`Alaa' reports that he heard `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez say in the outset of his Khutbah: "Praise be to Allah, we thank Him, seek His Assistance and Forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evils within ourselves and the evils of our bad deeds. Whosoever Allah guides can never be misled, and whosoever He misleads will never find guidance. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and that Muhammad is his Messenger and bondman. Whoever obeys Allah will succeed, and whoever disobeys him will go astray." Then he used to advice people to fear Allah and be conscious of Him, then he used to discuss the topic of the Khutbah. Then he used to finish the Khutbah with the verse:

"قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَى أَنفُسِهِمْ لا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ" (الزمر:٥٣)

"Say: O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls. Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: for Allah forgives all sins: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." (Az-Zumar: 53)

\`Umar's Terminal Illness and Death:

\`Umar Ibn \`Abdel-\`Azeez was once offered to be buried in Madeenah, next to the graves of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Bakr, and \`Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, but he commented saying: "By Allah, I would rather be tortured by Allah in Hell-Fire than do what would mean that I find myself worthy of being buried there."

When \`Umar's terminal illness worsened, all kept urging him to seek medical treatment, but he replied saying: "I feel that my time is up; if I would be cured by touching my earlobe or by smelling some perfume, I would not do that."

\`Ubayd Ibn Hasan reports that when \`Umar felt he had few moments to live, he ordered all those with him to leave him alone. Maslamah and Faatimah went out and stayed next to the door. Soon, they heard him saying: "Welcome to these faces, you are not humans or jinn." Then, he recited a Qur'anic verse:

"تِلْكَ الدَّارُ الآخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِينَ لا يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوًّا فِي الأَرْضِ وَلا فَسَادًا وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ" (القصص:٨٣)

"That Home of the Hereafter we shall give to those who intend not high handedness or mischief on earth: and the End is (best) for the righteous." (Al-Qasas: 83) They then entered his room to find him dead.

When people knew `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez had died, Al-Hassan Al-Basri said: "The best man on earth passed away."

Yoosuf Ibn Malik is reported to have said: "When we were burying `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez, a piece of paper feel from the sky with this inscription: In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Allah grants `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez protection from Hell-Fire."

`Umar's Advice to the New Caliph:

Qatadah reports that `Umar wrote to his successor: "In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful, from Allah's servant `Umar to Yazeed Ibn Abdel-Malik, peace be with you! All Praise and thanks are due too Allah, the One Who has no associate; there is no god but him! I am writing to you while I am suffering pains of severe illness. You know that I am responsible for my caliphate and Allah will reckon me for what I have done. I will not be able to hide anything from Him, and if Allah is pleased with me I will have succeeded, and will be spared eternal humiliation; and if He is enraged with me, I will be consigned to eternal Hell-Fire. So I invoke Allah, there is no god but Him, to protect me, with this Mercy, from Hell and to admit me to Paradise. I, hereby, urge you to be conscious and mindful of Allah, and to take good care of the people, for your caliphate will not last forever, peace be with you!

The Caliph Passes Away:

`Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez, may Allah be pleased with him, died at the Sim`aan Monastery near Horns, Syria in the month of Rajab, 101 AH, at the age of thirty nine years and six months. He was poisoned by the Umayyads who lost a lot of wealth and status at his hands; `Umar returned all state wealth to the public treasury. They managed to poison him for he ate whatever food he was given.

`Umar Ibn `Abdul-`Azeez once asked Mujahid about what people would say about his terminal condition, Mujahid said: "They say you are spellbound." `Umar commented "No, I am not. I know when I was exactly poisoned." Then, `Umar called one of his young male servants and asked him why he had poisoned him. He answered: "For 1000 dinars and a promise of my emancipation." `Umar asked him to get him that money. The servant brought it and `Umar put it in the public treasury and told the boy to keep a low profile till things cooled down.

`Umar's Last Speech:

Ibn As-Sa`eed Ibn Al-`Aas narrates that `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez said in his last speech to the people: "O Muslims, you were not created for fun, and are not left to lead a vain life. On a predestined day, Allah will judge and reckon you all. Those who will not be shown mercy by Almighty Allah will lose, and will be deprived of entering a Paradise that is as wide as heaven and earth. Don't you know that only he who fears the Hereafter will be safe on the Day of Judgment? You must work for your immortal after life and strive to get eternal bliss by not being only concerned about worldly affairs and pleasures. Don't trade security for fear, and what is much for what is less. If you do that, you will join the losers of your doomed predecessors, and other righteous ones will follow you, and so on, till Allah no one else but Him will be alive, today you bury one of your kith and kin who returns to Allah. You cover him with earth, in an uncomfortable grave after he is departed with his loved ones. Then he will be reckoned, and judge according to his deeds.

So, fear Allah before you die, and be pious before, your time for departing this world comes; and I am only saying this..." Then, he cried, and this made others cry. He resumed his speech: "I believe that I am the one who has the largest number of bad deed and sins and I seek Allah's Forgiveness." He continued crying till he wet his beard then, returned to his court and shortly afterwards, he passed away.

`Umar's Caliphate and Status:

Scholars have unanimously agreed that `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez was one of the just Imams, Righty-Guided Caliphs, and is said to be one of the twelve eminent Muslim Imams mentioned in this authentic Prophetic saying: "*This nation's affairs will always be on the right path till they have twelve caliphs, all from Quraysh.*"

`Umar was the Caliph for a relatively short period, but he was able to spread justice and restore the rights of all people. One of his men used to roam the streets everyday and call aloud: "Where are the poor? Where are those who wish to be married, but, can't afford it? Where are the downtrodden? Where are the orphans?" And he would give these people enough money to live on.

Most scholars agree that `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez is superior to Mu`awiyah Ibn Abi Sufyaan, for his matchless justice, modesty and asceticism.

`Umar wrote to his deputies in the different Arab provinces to be conscious of Allah, as this will make them get Divine acceptance and Allah will show them mercy and reward them generously. He used to remind them that many preach people to be God-conscious, yet very few listen and obey.

`Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez also told them that he who does not act as much as he talks will commit many sins, and he who worships Allah without being knowledgeable about Islam will err more than act right.

`Ali Ibn Zayd said: "Two men only of those I met in my life were created not to enter Hell: Al-Hassan and `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez.

`Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez used to give a hundred dinars each year to anyone who devoted himself to studying Islam and reciting the Qur'an in mosques,

`Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez used to order his men to employ only those who were scholars of the Qur'an senior posts, for they are righteous.

Furthermore, `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez renounced all the luxury he had enjoyed before, including posh clothes, sumptuous food and luxury furniture. He even stopped having sexual intercourse with his beautiful wife Faatimah

Bint `Abdel-Malik, who was known to be one of the most beautiful women of her time. An example of his asceticism is that `Umar Ibn `Abdel-`Azeez, before becoming the Caliph, used to find soft, silky clothes too rough, whereas after becoming the Caliph, he wore rough, mended clothes and said they were too soft. Furthermore, he ate very simple, basic food and served himself.

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